WATCH HER EVERY MOVE

TORONTONIAN EMERALD 'TOPAZ' BRADY IS ONE OF THE HOUSE GUESTS ON BIG BROTHER CANADA PAGE 22

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Black cop charged with IGNORING RACIAL TAUNTS

York Region police officer Dameian Muirhead is the focus of a hearing at the York Region Police headquarters. He is accused of not investigating racial taunts allegedly made to him by people at a rowdy farm party he was dispatched to. Muirhead is seen walking out of the hearing on a lunch break. Story, page 3. RICHARD LAUTENS/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

248 high school teachers may lose their jobs

Drop in enrolment. Concerned mother worries what proposed TDSB layoffs will mean for teen programs

Hundreds of high school teachers could be laid off as the Toronto public board grapples with a $55-million deficit, according to a staffing report that also recommends cuts to secretaries and vice-principals.

Last year, the Toronto District School Board axed 200 secondary teaching positions because of a drop in enrolment, and this year proposes a loss of 248.

"It's very frustrating to continually make cuts — it never ends," said Etobicoke trustee Chris Glover.

"High schools are taking a huge hit," added another trustee — from teachers to secretaries to hall monitors.

While overall enrolment is on the rise in the board — Canada's largest, and the seventh biggest in North America — it is fuelled by a boom in the elementary grades which has yet to filter up. Right now, it has more than 80,000 secondary students and 5,575 high school teachers.

"Losing those teachers — the fewer adults you have in the building, the less opportunity you have to engage kids," said Laurie Green, a concerned mother of four whose son attends Etobicoke Collegiate.

Even if enrolment is down, losing staff "always has an impact on what programs schools can offer. They scramble around to find people to offer core subjects" but often the classes teachers feel the most passionate about can be lost.

Indeed, the report notes that by this fall, about half of all Toronto high schools will have fewer than 800 students. "Schools that have smaller student populations will have challenges offering a full breadth of programs," it says.

While secondary schools take a hit, elementary schools are poised to add teachers and early childhood educators, mostly because of full-day kindergarten. Trustees will discuss the recommendations at a committee meeting on Thursday. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Ford to speak at prayer rally

Mayor to be part of 'The War on the Church' event put on by an opponent of gay marriage PAGE 4

Tourists die in hot-air balloon

At least 19 people floating above Egypt were killed when their balloon caught fire PAGE 8

Get there fast & take it slow

Ernest Hemingway spent a lot of his time in the Florida Keys and so should you PAGE 26

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Animal rights. Group opposes move of elephant to Bowmanville zoo

A California-based animal-rights group is urging Canadian and American officials to deny a permit for the export of a U.S. circus elephant to a Toronto-area zoo.

Mike Hackenberger of the Bowmanville Zoo says they are trying to acquire a male Asian elephant named Colonel from the circus in Hugo, Okla., for breeding purposes.

Nicole Meyer of In Defense of Animals says her group believes the proposed transfer for breeding is a ruse, and alleges the elephant will be used for commercial purposes, in violation of the U.S. Endangered Species Act and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

Hackenberger says he already has an elephant he can use for commercial purposes and says Colonel will be used for breeding in an effort to preserve the endangered species. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Transit

TTC planning to streamline maps

The TTC is testing new bus-stop pole designs and station maps in hopes of coming up with a clear, uniform design that offers useful information and eliminates the hodgepodge of signage that has sprung up across the system's 10,000 surface stops.

The idea is to integrate maps with the city's broader "wayfinding" strategy.

The busy maps that appear system-wide will be replaced with more specific versions. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Snow plow. Man who killed Toronto cop not criminally responsible, says lawyer

A 44-year-old drifter was in a psychotic state when he stole a snow plow and used it to kill a Toronto police officer and should be found not criminally responsible, a jury was told Tuesday.

There is "no doubt" Richard Kachkar was driving a stolen plow on Jan. 12, 2011, when it hit and killed Sgt. Ryan Russell, Ontario Superior Court Judge Ian MacDonnell told the jury trying Kachkar's case. What jurors must decide is whether Kachkar knew what he was doing was wrong. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"Mr. Kachkar ... was suffering from a mental disorder the entire time that he was operating that snow plow."

Bob Richardson, Richard Kachkar's lawyer

Black cop allegedly subjected to racial taunts faces charges

Alleged lynching remark. York Regional Police officer charged with neglect of duty for not investigating racial threat allegations against himself

A black York Regional Police officer faces misconduct charges for his handling of a farm party turned ugly, when he was allegedly subjected to repeated racial taunts and told words to the effect of "I would love to see that guy hanging from a tree."

The target of the alleged lynching remark, Const. Dameian Muirhead, is scheduled to attend police disciplinary hearings Tuesday and Wednesday. He faces Police Act charges of insubordination, discreditable conduct and neglect of duty after a civilian alleges he was rudely treated on the Victoria Day long weekend in May 2011.

The ugly altercation came after Muirhead was dispatched to investigate an incident when a woman was seriously injured when someone ran over her with a four-wheeler off-road vehicle at a party.

In Muirhead's version of the incident, investigating officers could see two shirtless males who appeared to be hiding on the farm.

Muirhead told police investigators he and two fellow officers immediately met with hostile resistance by approximately 15 individuals who had been drinking.

None of the partygoers would identify themselves, admit that the suspect had been on the premises or provide identification, Muirhead said in his defence.

In Muirhead's version of the story, he remained professional and ignored the racial taunts as he checked the licence plates.

Things got particularly ugly when Muirhead decided to run an ownership check of licence plates of the vehicles parked at the farm. During the check, a jacket on a motorcycle fell onto the ground.

A man with clenched fists quickly and aggressively approached him, ordering him to "Pick up my (expletive) jacket!" Muirhead said.

York region police officer Dameian Muirhead, left, is the focus of a hearing at the York Region Police HQ. He is accused of not investigating racial taunts against himself. Rheal Duguay, right, is a witness and a key participant in the original incident. RICHARD LAUTENS/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

At this point, according to Muirhead's explanation to his police superiors, he stepped back to de-escalate the tension while a fellow officer and the man who owned the jacket yelled at each other, with the motorcyclist calling the police officer a "(expletive) pig."

The racial taunts continued, with comments on the darkness of his skin and someone saying, "I would love to see that guy hanging from a tree," Muirhead said.

Partygoer Rheal Duguay of Aurora filed a written complaint on Muirhead's conduct to the Office of the Independent Police Review Director. His May 25, 2011, complaint does not refer to any comments about lynching or racial taunts.

Duguay complained that Muirhead dropped his leather motorcycle jacket and his eight-year-old daughter's motorcycle helmet onto the dirt without apology.

The complaint to the Office of the Independent Police Review director was referred to York Regional Police, who charged Muirhead with neglect of duty for not investigating the allegations of racial threats. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Ford tapped to protest zoning bylaw

'War on the Church.' Controversial Christian leader says mayor will speak at prayer rally against restrictions on new places of worship

JESSICA SMITH
jessica.smith@metronews.ca

Mayor Rob Ford is to be the key speaker at a prayer rally meant to influence city councillors on where new churches can be built in Toronto, according to a controversial Christian educator.

Charles McVety, president of the Canada Christian College, is known for being an outspoken social conservative and opponent of gay marriage.

The prayer rally is to be held on March 2.

City staff is currently reworking pre-amalgamation zoning for Toronto. McVety wants churches to be built in industrial zones. Prohibiting that would be part of what he calls "The War on the Church."

"When the city puts forward a new bylaw that doesn't allow for new churches, that is a declaration that places of worship are not welcome. So that is a metaphorical war," he said. "That is attacking the growth and development of churches."

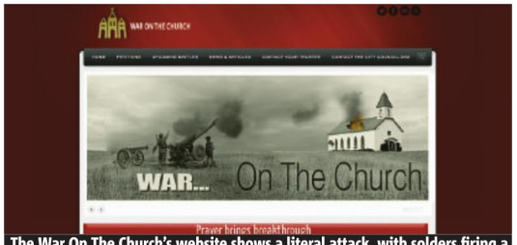
The latest proposed zoning plan would allow places of worship to be built, with some restrictions, almost everywhere but industrial zones. That's not enough for McVety.

"Most new churches today are established in light-industrial areas," he said. "These empty buildings where businesses moved to newer, bigger automated plants north of the city and they've vacated these old warehouse-type buildings, and they make ideal places of worship, primarily for new Canadian groups coming to Toronto and need a place to worship in their own language."

McVety said faith leaders will speak and pray at the rally, which according to him will feature Ford as a speaker. However, the mayor's office did not return repeated confirmation requests.

McVety was once kicked off the air by Christian broadcaster CTS after his comments about homosexuality violated the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council codes. He said that his being a controversial figure shouldn't affect councillors' decision to attend the rally.

"It's possible they may feel discriminatory towards me," he said. "But this isn't about me. This is about places of worship. This is about primarily new immigrants finding new places to worship. This has nothing to do with Charles McVety."



The War On The Church's website shows a literal attack, with solders firing a cannon into a burning church. STOPTHEWARONTHECHURCH.CA

Taxpayers off the hook

City won't have to pay for legal costs: Ford

Mayor Rob Ford said taxpayers won't be covering his legal bills.

After winning his third major court battle in recent months, Ford told the Sun News Network that the citizen who launched a failed case against his campaign-spending violations, Paul Magder, should be responsible for his $116,000 defence bill.

Last week, constitutional lawyer Clayton Ruby's legal team suggested Ford use the city's insurance. Ford scoffed at the suggestion.

"The last thing I'm going to do is go to the taxpayers and say, 'Give me the $120,000 … that they owe me. If Mr. Magder and Mr. Ruby took me to court and they lost, then they're going to pay it. I'm not going to have the taxpayers pay it." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Life of Jonas: Movie tiger was 'one in a million'

Before Life of Pi, there was the life of Jonas, a Bengal tiger from the Bowmanville Zoo. He may have leapt into silver screen immortality as one of five tigers — and the only Canadian — chosen from animal performers around the world to portray a tiger in the Oscar-winning movie by director Ang Lee.

But in rural Ontario, he is simply one of the favourites of visitors to the small zoo owned by Michael Hackenberger, a big cat who loved to romp with a small dog, the family's Jack Russell named Mickey. And the much-loved protégé of Hackenberger's son Dirk Hackenberger, 16, who helped raise and train him from kittenhood.

Seeing Ang Lee pick up the Oscar for best director on Sunday (along with three other Oscars) brought back some bittersweet memories for the family. Jonas died on a veterinarian's operating table last summer, during a procedure to fix a birth defect that had been unknown until the tiger started having breathing problems one hot day.

It turned out that the big orange cat had been born "with a ticking time bomb and we'd never known," said Hackenberger. Jonas had a large hole in his diaphragm and his liver had passed through it, pressing against his lungs.

Both Hackenbergers attended the operation and when it became apparent that Jonas was in crisis and there were attempts to revive him, Michael noticed that his son had left the room.

"I ran outside and I could see him walking down the road towards the zoo.... He was just sobbing.... But we walked back.... It's important to say your goodbyes."

Jonas was buried on the zoo property.

"He was very young when we got him. About eight kilograms and he was still drinking from a bottle," recalls Hackenberger.

By the time Jonas was full-grown and weighing in at 240 kilograms, he was "unusually" sociable for a male tiger, even a neutered one. Dirk could lead him around on a leash.

"If you put a tiger on a leash, you need a sweet tiger. And that's what we had.... Jonas was one in a million. He was a straight-ahead gentleman."

Jonas had once been stolen, along with a couple of camels, when a trailer belonging to the zoo was taken by thieves. The animals were later found unharmed in Quebec. That was in 2010.

The tiger had appeared in a few commercials and once made a promotional appearance at a football game before he was auditioned for Life of Pi, filmed in Taiwan in the winter of 2011. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Dirk Hackenberger with Jonas, the Bengal tiger from the Bowmanville zoo that was one of five tigers to star in Life of Pi. Jonas died during an operation last year. BOWMANVILLE ZOO HANDOUT PHOTO

Izms or isn't it?

Synthetic 'pot' falls in legal grey area

It's been linked to psychotic episodes, suicides and seizures, but a chemical alternative to marijuana has been available in Canada for at least two years.

Izms, an herbal mixture doused with the chemical, can be purchased online or in local convenience, grocery or head shops.

Health Canada says it is illegal because its main ingredients, synthetic cannabinoids, are "'similar synthetic preparations' of cannabis."

But Toronto criminal defence lawyers and some police aren't so sure.

The CDSA states for a chemical to be an "analogue" of an already controlled substance, it must have "a substantially similar chemical structure." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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$25K reward in TTC shooting case

Toronto police have re-released photos of a suspect wanted in the year-old shooting of a Toronto Transit Commission worker and are appealing again for help tracking the suspect down.

No arrests have been made in the case of the ticket collector who was shot and wounded during an attempted armed robbery at the west-end (Dupont) subway station on Feb. 26, 2012.

Police say the suspect approached the collector's booth and when the worker inside refused to hand over cash, the suspect fired several shots, hitting the 52-year-old victim in the neck and shoulder.

The suspect — whom investigators say could be male or female — then fled empty-handed.

Police say they believe the same person is responsible for similar robberies at the same station on June 11 and Oct. 2, 2011.

TTC spokesman Brad Ross says the collector is recovering from his injuries but has not returned to work.

He says the transit commission has taken steps to increase the safety of the booths. It's also offering a $25,000 reward for information that leads to an arrest and conviction in the case.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Suspect's description

- The suspect is described as white, about 35 to 40 years old with a stocky build and was last seen wearing all-black clothing and a black balaclava.

A suspect is captured on security-camera footage at Dupont subway station on Feb. 26, 2012, when a TTC collector was shot in the neck and shoulder.
TORONTO POLICE PHOTO

At the pump

Liberal MPP introduces gas-&-dash bill

Ontario should require drivers to pay upfront before buying gasoline to stop so-called gas-and-dash thefts that have claimed the lives of gas-station attendants, Liberal backbencher Mike Colle said Tuesday.

His private-member's bill also calls for suspending the licences of those drivers convicted of gas thefts and fines for employers who force attendants to pay for the stolen gas out of their wages. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Gamblers lose in casino and court

Four high-stakes gamblers who lost $2.1 million over a few years at Fallsview Casino lost another round Tuesday in court.

The four roulette players tried to sue Fallsview Casino and the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario, alleging that the Niagara Falls casino's rule for what should happen in the event of a so-called floating ball was illegal.

Fallsview Casino's roulette dealers were allowed to remove a ball if it was either stationary while the wheel was spinning or if it just continued to spin around the wheel for a long time without falling into a numbered pocket.

The casino has in the past asked a lower-court judge to dismiss the lawsuits before even going to trial and the gamblers took their case to the Court of Appeal for Ontario, but the high court dismissed their appeals.

The gamblers were asking the courts to make the casino return all the money they lost, but the courts ruled that shouldn't happen and now they are also on the hook for $25,000 in legal bills for the casino and the commission.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Court rules Ontario's "floating ball" rule stands. ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

Attack. Parent charged after teen ref assaulted following hockey game

A central Ontario man is facing charges after a teenaged referee at a minor hockey game in Port Perry was threatened and assaulted by a parent.

Police say several parents confronted a 17-year-old referee after a game on Feb. 19 at the Scugog arena, saying they were unhappy with his officiating of a novice game, which involved players under nine.

It's alleged that after the victim left the arena and was walking to his vehicle, one parent threatened him and kicked him in the legs from behind.

Brad Fenney, 29, of Scugog, is charged with assault and uttering threats. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lawsuit claims less buzz in beer

Beer lovers across the U.S. have filed $5-million class-action lawsuits accusing Anheuser-Busch of watering down Budweiser, Michelob and other brands.

The suits were filed in Pennsylvania, California and other states on behalf of consumers allegedly cheated out of the beverage's stated alcohol content. Budweiser and Michelob each boast being five per cent alcohol, while some "light" versions are said to be just over four per cent.

Lead lawyer Josh Boxer of San Rafael, Calif., said Tuesday the suits are based on information from former employees at some of the company's 13 U.S. breweries. Boxer said water is added just before bottling, and cuts the stated alcohol content by three to eight per cent.

The multinational Anheuser-Busch InBev calls the claims groundless, and says its beers fully comply with labelling laws.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Beer lovers across the U.S. have filed $5-million class-action lawsuits accusing Anheuser-Busch of watering down Budweiser, Michelob and other brands.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

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Titanic II: What could possibly go wrong?

Setting sail in 2016?
Australian billionaire launches plans for replica of doomed ship

In this rendering provided by Blue Star Line, the Titanic II is shown cruising at sea. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

An Australian billionaire is getting ready to build a new version of the Titanic that could set sail in late 2016.

Clive Palmer unveiled blueprints for the famously doomed ship's namesake Tuesday at the Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum in New York. He said construction is scheduled to start soon in China.

Palmer said 40,000 people have expressed interest in tickets for the maiden voyage, taking the original course from Southampton, England, to New York. He said people are inspired by his quest to replicate one of the most famous vessels in history.

"We all live on this planet, we all breathe the same air and, of course, the Titanic is about the things we've got in common," he said. "It links three continents."

The original Titanic was the world's largest and most luxurious ocean liner when it hit an iceberg in the North Atlantic and sank on April 15, 1912. Only 700 people of the more than 2,200 on board survived the most famous maritime disaster in history, partly because there were not enough lifeboats to carry everyone.

Passengers on board the replica will dress in the fashion of that period and eat dishes from the original menu, in dining rooms copied from the ill-fated predecessor. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A rendering of the gymnasium on the Titanic II is shown.
BLUE STAR LINE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Arturo Gatti. Widow of dead boxing champ extends hand of friendship to his family

The widow of former boxing champ Arturo Gatti has set up a business in Montreal and wants to be friends with the dead fighter's family, according to Global Montreal.

Amanda Rodrigues Gatti was arrested in July 2009 on suspicion of murder in Gatti's death. She was released after an investigation by Brazilian authorities deemed the former junior welterweight champ's death a suicide. But Rodrigues Gatti was then embroiled in a nasty court battle with her in-laws over Gatti's $3.4-million estate. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Back and forth

Rodrigues Gatti told Global she would like Gatti's mother to put aside her suspicions and be part of her life. But Ida Gatti said she is afraid to be in the same room as her daughter-in-law.

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ETOBICOKE
- Cloverdale Mall
- Sherway Gardens
- Woodbine Centre

HAMILTON
- 1289 Upper James St.
- Eastgate Square
- Lime Ridge Mall
- Lime Ridge Mall – kiosk

MARKHAM
- 7357 Woodbine Ave.
- Markville Shopping Centre
- Pacific Mall

MILTON
- 377 Main St. E.

MISSISSAUGA
- 980 Eglinton Ave. E.
- Dixie Value Mall
- Erin Mills Town Centre
- Heartland Power Centre
- Sheridan Centre
- Square One Shopping Centre
- Square One Shopping Centre – kiosk
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NEWMARKET
- Upper Canada Mall

NORTH YORK
- 1635 Lawrence Ave. W.
- 170 Rimrock Rd.
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- Bayview Village
- Centerpoint Mall
- Crossroads Plaza
- Empress Walk
- Lawrence Square
- Sheppard Centre
- Yorkdale Shopping Centre – kiosk
- Yorkgate Mall

OAKVILLE
- Hampshire Gate at Dundas
- Oakville Place

OSHAWA
- Five Points Mall
- Oshawa Centre

PICKERING
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Tourists bathed in fire in most lethal balloon accident on record

A policeman stands guard at the site of the accident in Luxor, Egypt. NASSER NASSER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Egypt. At least 19 dead, with two others suffering severe burns

A hot-air balloon carrying tourists over Egypt's ancient city of Luxor caught fire Tuesday, and some passengers trying to escape the flames leaped to their deaths before the craft crashed in a sugar-cane field. At least 19 tourists were killed in what is believed to be the world's deadliest ballooning accident.

The accident was a new blow to Egypt's tourism industry, which has been gutted by the country's turmoil the past two years.

The crash raised accusations that authorities have let safety standards fall amid the political instability, though the civil aviation chief insisted his ministry keeps stringent inspections.

The balloon was carrying 20 tourists — from France, Britain, Belgium, Hungary, Japan and Hong Kong — and an Egyptian pilot on a flight over Luxor, officials said.

"I saw tourists catching fire, and they were jumping from the balloon. They were trying to flee the fire, but it was on their bodies," said Hassan Abdel-Rasoul, a farmer in al-Dhabaa. He said one of those he saw on fire was a visibly pregnant woman.

Bodies of the dead tourists were scattered across the field.

The crash immediately killed 18, according to Luxor's governor, Ezzat Saad. Two Britons and the Egyptian pilot were taken to the hospital, but one of the Britons died of his injuries soon after. The other Briton and the Egyptian, who state media said suffered severe burns, were flown to Cairo for further treatment.

The Department of Foreign Affairs in Ottawa says the Canadian Embassy in Cairo has confirmed that no Canadians have been affected.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The accident

The launch site shortly before the explosion. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The balloon was landing when a cable got caught around a helium tube and a fire erupted, according to an investigator with the state prosecutor's office.

- **Escalation.** The balloon then shot up in the air, the investigator said. The fire set off an explosion of a gas canister and the balloon plunged some 300 metres to the ground, according to an Egyptian security official.

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California

Zoo's wayward bald eagle welcomed back to the nest

A radio transmitter and then a feast of quail and mouse led to the capture of a California zoo's bald eagle after three days on the lam.

The Palo Alto Junior Museum and Zoo's tame 24-year-old bald eagle Sequoia was enjoying exercise Saturday when, instead of returning to handlers, she flew north and roosted in Menlo Park. Strong winds had spooked her. But Sequoia was tracked Monday to a Redwood City tree.

When found, the famished bird dropped from her tree to the arm of a trainer, John Flynn, who gave her the feast of quail and a mouse.

Sequoia ventured out on her own eight times while at the San Francisco Zoo. She joined the Palo Alto zoo only last year.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Austria

Attempted car theft or elaborate pre-snooze ritual?

As in any place, dozing off behind the wheel in Austria can be deadly. But for one teenager, it could result in a charge of attempted car theft.

State broadcaster ORF quotes police as saying they have identified a 17-year-old male as a suspect after a woman found her vehicle partially hotwired, a door forced open and a youth apparently drunk and fast asleep inside.

ORF said Tuesday the culprit rewired the vehicle to its normal state and walked off after being discovered Sunday.

He was traced after the owner reported the incident to police.

A policeman in Salzburg province confirmed the incident on the phone. He refused to identify either himself or those involved.

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Swiss Red Cross to keep blood from Greece

No bread, no red. Aid organization says it will halve shipments to struggling country, citing bad credit

Thalassemia patients are among those who need blood in Greece, but the Swiss Red Cross is planning to cut its supply to the country. GETTY IMAGES

The Swiss Red Cross is slashing its supply of donor blood to Greece because the financially stricken country has failed to pay its bills on time, the head of the group's transfusion service said Tuesday.

Rudolf Schwabe confirmed Swiss media reports that Greece had run up debts of several million Swiss francs in the past. While those debts have since been repaid, the non-profit SRC has decided to halve its blood shipments to Greece in the coming years in order to limit its financial risk, he said.

Greece's international creditors have demanded the government cut spending on pharmaceutical products as part of bailout agreements.

The Swiss blood sent to Greece comes from unused emergency stockpiles and is designated for humanitarian use. In the past, the SRC charged Greece five million Swiss francs ($5.4 million) to cover its costs for supplying 28,000 blood packets a year.

The Swiss blood shipped to Greece helps meet demand from the country's thalassemia sufferers. There's about 3,000 people in Greece with a severe form of this genetic disorder. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Prostitution. Amsterdam cracking down on crime through age increase

Amsterdam plans to raise the minimum age for prostitutes from 18 to 21 and force brothels to close during early morning hours.

At a press conference Tuesday, Mayor Eberhard van der Laan said the moves came from a decision to crack down on crime in the city's famed Red Light District and protect sex workers from abuse.

Amsterdam is home to about 8,000 professional sex workers, the city estimates, half of whom operate behind windows with red velvet curtains and red lights.

Van der Laan said that under the new regime all windows would be closed from 4 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Prostitution was legalized in the Netherlands in 2000. It has been tolerated in Amsterdam since the 1600s. But the city has been tightening its rules. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Advertisements for sex shops are seen everywhere in Amsterdam's world-famous Red Light District in the Netherlands. Now the city is planning to make some changes to the sex industry. PETER DEJONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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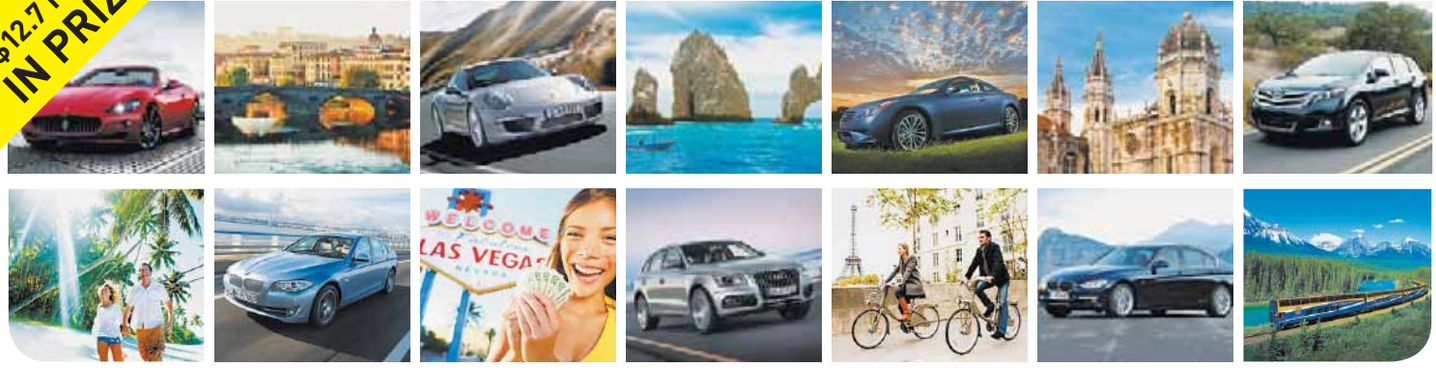

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Pistorius' testimony may damn him on lesser charge

Could see 'culpable homicide' charge. No provision for shooting at unknown target

Oscar Pistorius at his bail hearing on Feb. 22. THEMBA HADEBE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Even if Oscar Pistorius is acquitted of murder, firearms and legal experts in South Africa believe that, by his own account, the star athlete violated gun-handling regulations and exposed himself to a homicide charge by shooting into a closed door without knowing who was behind it.

Pistorius testified that he shot at the door, fearing but not knowing for certain that an intruder was on the other side. Instead, it was Pistorius' girlfriend, Reeva Steenkamp.

Prosecutors charged Pistorius with premeditated murder, saying the shooting followed an argument between the two.

South Africa has stringent laws regulating the use of lethal force for self-protection. In order to get a firearm permit, applicants must not only know those rules but must demonstrate proficiency with the weapon and knowledge of its safe handling, making it far tougher to legally own a gun in South Africa than in many other countries.

"There is no situation in South Africa that allows a person to shoot at a threat that is not identified," said Andre Pretorius, president of the Professional Firearm Trainers Council, a regulatory body for firearms instructors.

"It could have been a minor — a 15-year-old kid, a 12-year-old kid — breaking in to get food."

Experts said that even if the prosecution fails to prove premeditated murder, firing several shots through a closed door could bring a conviction for the charge of culpable homicide, an equivalent to manslaughter covering unintentional deaths through negligence. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Loss

Pistorius plans memorial

Oscar Pistorius planned a personal memorial service on Tuesday for Reeva Steenkamp.

The service would be at the home of his uncle Arnold, where the athlete has been staying since he was released on bail awaiting trial.

A woman holds a photo of Reeva Steenkamp as she leaves her funeral. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Quebec. Alleged assault by Sen. Patrick Brazeau detailed in police warrant

A search warrant filed in court says an ongoing argument over aboriginal issues at the home of Sen. Patrick Brazeau escalated into a physical and sexual confrontation.

The police warrant details allegations by a woman in Brazeau's home who says he punched her, choked her, tore her pants off and pushed her down a flight of stairs.

The complainant also alleges Brazeau aggressively grabbed her breast and another body part, called her vulgar names, spit in her face, and tore up a bra and blouse she was trying to pack.

Court documents say Brazeau, 38, has formally pleaded not guilty to charges of assault and sexual assault.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Alberta. Three in custody after sheriff shot in court, prisoners escape in his van

Three men are in custody after a scuffle in a small-town courthouse ended with a sheriff being shot in the hand and a short-lived escape in his vehicle.

The shooting took place before noon Tuesday in Whitecourt, Alta., where two men were making a court appearance after a drug bust last week.

"You could hear behind the door where they keep prisoners to stand trial ... there was a fight happening," said Kathlene Campbell-Conlon, a reporter covering the case.

"An officer ... ran behind the door," she said. "You heard ... two, maybe three gunshots."

Mayor Trevor Thain confirmed the prisoners escaped in the sheriff's van. Thain said the pair was arrested at a farmhouse about 10 kilometres south of Whitecourt.

Thain said police detained a third man at the farmhouse.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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1998 file photo of Jonathan Pollard
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Israelis to press Obama to free spy

Pollard affair. President Shimon Peres set to raise the issue in a meeting next month

Israel's Nobel-laureate president, backed by thousands of followers, is leading an effort to press President Barack Obama during his upcoming visit to free convicted spy Jonathan Pollard, ending one of the most painful episodes between the two allies.

Pollard was sentenced to life in prison in 1987 for passing classified material to Israel.

Pollard is said to be in poor health, and his case has become a rallying cry in Israel. Leaders routinely call for his release and say his 28 years in prison are excessive punishment. But stiff opposition from the American military and intelligence community has deterred a string of American presidents from releasing him.

Plea

"Mr. President, please save me. J. Pollard."

Message on the wall of a prison cell.

Next month's visit by Obama, coupled with a perceived softening of the American stance, is raising hopes that Pollard, 58, may get released.

More than 65,000 Israelis have signed a petition calling on Obama to free Pollard, the Facebook page of the U.S. embassy in Israel has been flooded with pardon requests and a nationwide campaign began Tuesday urging President Shimon Peres to push for Pollard's release. He quickly agreed.

Pollard, a Jewish civilian intelligence analyst, was arrested by FBI agents in Washington in 1985 after unsuccessfully seeking refuge at the Israeli Embassy in Washington. He pleaded guilty to leaking classified documents to Israel and received a life sentence. He is eligible for parole in two years.

The Pollard affair is enmeshed in highly fraught issues. One is the very idea of spying against an ally — especially a country's primary patron. Another is the delicate issue of suspected dual loyalties among American Jews, and their own concerns about being seen in such a light.

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Budget cuts. U.S. releasing many illegal immigrants

A week before mandatory budget cuts go into effect across the government, the Department of Homeland Security has started releasing illegal immigrants being held in immigration jails across the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said Tuesday.

Spokeswoman Gillian Christensen said ICE has reviewed "several hundred cases" of immigrants being held in jails and released them in the last week. They have been "placed on an appropriate, more cost-effective form of supervised release," she said.

Christensen said the agency's "priority for detention remains on serious criminal offenders and other individuals who pose a significant threat to public safety." She did not say how released immigrants were selected or what jails they were released from.

Christensen said Tuesday that released immigrants will still face deportation proceedings. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A man rests his hands on a fence facing the U.S. from a Mexican customs station after being detained by U.S. Border Patrol. GREGORY BULL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mexico

At least 26,121 reported missing during drug war

Mexico's new administration says an official count shows at least 26,121 people were reported missing during the term of President Felipe Calderon, who launched the country's offensive against drug cartels.

The list used data from local prosecutors across Mexico, and includes those reported missing for any reason, using data collected up until November 2012.

The list has been a subject of controversy in Mexico for weeks. A member of Calderon's administration disputed the figure, saying the only registry on disappeared people contains 5,319 names.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Safety concerns

Israel quietly returns migrants to Sudan

Israel has quietly repatriated hundreds of Sudanese migrants in recent months, drawing accusations from rights groups that it has coerced the Africans into potentially life-threatening situations and possibly violated international norms for treating refugees.

Israel says the departures have been voluntary, but they follow mass arrests of migrants and vows by leaders to halt the influx.

Over the past eight years, as many as 60,000 African migrants, mostly Sudanese and Eritrean, have sneaked into Israel, some fleeing repressive regimes and others looking for work and better conditions. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Justice system failing Ontario First Nations, report claims

Changing course. Retired Supreme Court justice outlines province's 'systemic discrimination'

Ontario's First Nations face a justice and jury system in a state of crisis that requires urgent action, former Supreme Court justice Frank Iacobucci reported Tuesday.

In a strong indictment of the current setup, Iacobucci warned the issue threatens relations between aboriginals and non-aboriginals.

"There is not only the problem of a lack of representation of First Nations peoples on juries that is of serious proportion," his report states.

"It is also regrettably the fact that the justice system generally as applied to First Nations peoples, particularly in the north, is quite frankly in a crisis."

In 2011, the Ontario government asked the former justice to investigate after inquests and criminal trials ground to a halt over the lack of on-reserve aboriginals on juries.

In his research, Iacobucci said he found a state of conflict between the justice system and the ideologies and approach of First Nations peoples.

Aboriginals experience "systemic discrimination" when it comes to criminal justice or child services and the courts, he said.

The jurist acknowledged his mandate did not extend to delving into the larger justice system or aboriginal socio-economic conditions, but said it would be folly to ignore the backdrop.

Left behind

"The justice system generally as applied to First Nations peoples, particularly in the north, is quite frankly in a crisis."

Retired Supreme Court justice Frank Iacobucci

Retired Supreme Court justice Frank Iacobucci has released a report criticizing the justice system's treatment of aboriginals. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

While aboriginals are over-represented in prisons, their under-representation on juries extends to every facet of the justice system that has alienated First Nations, he said.

"Access to justice, the administration of justice, the availability and quality of legal services, the treatment of First Nations peoples in the justice system; all are wanting in northern Ontario," Iacobucci said in Thunder Bay, Ont.

In all, Iacobucci's report makes 17 recommendations he says are aimed at ensuring that the cultural values, traditional laws and ideologies of First Nations are better reflected in the justice system.

They include setting up a group to advise the attorney general on First Nations and justice issues; giving cultural training to officials in the justice system in contact with aboriginal; and allowing reserve residents to volunteer for jury duty. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Response

First Nations leaders called the report an important first step in dealing with a long festering issue.

- "Justice Iacobucci has told the truth about how the justice system treats First Nations people," said Alvin Fiddler, deputy grand chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation.
- "He has called on the Ontario government to move urgently, and we agree with this assessment."

Implementation

Gov't will act quickly: Attorney general

Iacobucci called his recommendations straightforward and inexpensive to implement.

"Doing nothing will be a profound shame, especially when there has been a greater recognition throughout Canada of the tragic history of aboriginal people."

He said First Nations want more control of community justice issues, and want to be involved in improving their representation on juries.

Ontario Attorney General John Gerretsen said the government planned to act quickly.

"We will form an implementation committee that includes representatives from the First Nations community and from various government ministries," Gerretsen said.

He also said he would set up the recommended advisory group. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Findings

Among other things, Iacobucci's report finds on-reserve residents make up one-third of people in the northern district of Kenora, but typically comprise under 10 per cent of the jury roll.

- **Thunder Bay.** Similarly, on-reserve residents account for about five per cent of the population in the Thunder Bay area, but make up only 1.3 per cent of jury roll.
- **Reluctance.** Many aboriginals are "plainly reluctant" to participate in juries because of larger conflicts with the justice system, Iacobucci said.
- **Coercive language.** Even the wording of the jury questionnaire, he noted, is seen by First Nations as coercive and threatening.
- **Beyond the bare minimum.** The province, which argues it has made its best efforts at inclusiveness, needs to look beyond doing the bare minimum to ensure aboriginal representation of juries, he said.

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Syria-Israeli border. UN confirms staffer missing, believed to be a Canadian

The United Nations has confirmed that one of its staff members, believed to be Canadian, is missing along the Syrian-Israeli border.

Eduardo Del Buey, deputy spokesman for the secretary general, told a media briefing in New York that an employee working with the peacekeeping mission along the Golan Heights is unaccounted for in the region.

He would not confirm a name or nationality, but media reports in Israel identify the man as Carl Campeau, a Canadian legal adviser.

Del Buey refused all other comment.

The Times of Israel reports that the staffer was stationed with the UN Disengagement Observer Force, which is based on the Syrian side of the demilitarized zone separating the two countries. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Danger zone

Troops loyal to the regime of President Bashar Assad have apparently fled the Golan Heights, leaving rebel forces in control of the area.

- Campeau has apparently been missing for several days.

Manitoba

Soldier jailed for offering woman, teen to have sex with him and a dog

A Manitoba-based soldier deployed twice to Afghanistan is being jailed for 90 days after he offered to pay a girl and a woman to have sex with him and a dog.

Tyson Larry Shiels of Canadian Forces Base Shilo admitted to contacting the 17-year-old teen and the woman online last September and offered both $2,000 to have sex.

Court heard that Shiels,31, also sent them explicit images of himself. THE CANADIAN PRESS

N.Y. marks anniversary of 1st World Trade Center bombing

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, left, joins Stephen Knapp Jr., right, and his family as they lay flowers during a ceremony to honor the six people who died 20 years ago in the first terrorist attack on the World Trade Center on Tuesday in New York. MARY ALTAFFER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Twenty years ago.
Ceremony held at 9-11 memorial to remember 1993 attack that killed six people, injured more than 1,000

The two terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, eight years apart, converged Tuesday in the form of a piece of granite — part of a memorial to those who died in 1993 that was itself destroyed on Sept. 11, 2001.

The jagged fragment was displayed during a ceremony marking the 20th anniversary of the 1993 attack.

A bell tolled for a moment of silence at 12:18 p.m., the exact time of the explosion under one of the twin towers that killed six people. More than 1,000 people were injured when terrorists detonated a truck bomb in an underground garage.

Family, friends and city officials stood near the memorial to those who perished in the 2001 attack, which toppled the same tower targeted in the 1993 explosion.

"There are some days when you can't remember what he sounded like, but then there are other days when you expect to see him in the morning, when you wake up," Stephen Knapp said after the ceremony, his voice breaking as he remembered his father, also named Stephen Knapp. He was 18 when his father died.

On Tuesday, Knapp joined about 50 people — including Mayor Michael Bloomberg and former Mayor David Dinkins — for the anniversary ceremony. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quote

"I want to show them the good that can come from it, and how people stand together and they rebuild."

Stephen Knapp Jr., who was 18 when his father died, on bringing his two daughters, ages 4 and 6, to the ceremony.

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3rd woman testifies in cannibalism-plot case

A woman who prosecutors said was one of the intended victims of a New York police officer's cannibalism plot told a jury she never felt threatened by the man, providing an opening for the defence to highlight claims that it was all fantasy.

Elizabeth Sauer, 29, was called as a government witness Tuesday on the second day of 28-year-old Officer Gilberto Valle's trial on charges that he conspired to kidnap, kill and eat women he had described in chats on a fetish website.

Sauer, Valle's former college classmate, testified that she received a disturbing Facebook message from Valle's wife last year that sounded so crazy that she texted him to warn that the account must have been hacked. Either that "or you're trying to sell me into white slavery," she recalled joking in the text.

On cross examination, Sauer told defence attorney Julia Gatto that she never felt threatened by Valle.

Her testimony was similar to that of Andria Noble, a 27-year-old Ohio state prosecutor, who told the jury late Monday that she never saw Valle be violent when she knew him at the University of Maryland. She said he delivered on a promise to provide her with her own bedroom when she visited him once in New York during a break from law school.

"I made sure he knew it was just strictly as friends," Noble testified.

Maureen Hartingan, a former high school classmate of Valle, followed Sauer to the witness stand, saying she hadn't seen him in a couple of years when he suggested that he stop by her job to say hello. He was in uniform when he showed up outside her Times Square office building in his police cruiser.

Hartingan, 26, testified there was "nothing unusual" about the visit with someone who had asked her out in high school, when she made it clear she just wanted to be friends.

She said that in the last year they had exchanged birthday greetings and other pleasantries. Valle had bragged about his daughter, Josephine, and how he was hoping for a promotion at the police department, she recalled. Once, she said, she even suggested he and his wife stop by her new apartment.

When a defence lawyer asked if there was anything in the interactions "that created alarm in your mind," she said there was not. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This undated photo submitted into evidence by Assistant Federal Defender Julia L. Gatto shows Gilberto Valle with his daughter. Valle is accused of conspiracy to kidnap a woman and unauthorized use of a law-enforcement database. ASSISTANT FEDERAL DEFENDER JULIA L. GATTO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Employment

Help-wanted ads point to strong job creation in February

The Conference Board of Canada says the country's employment prospects are picking up after going through a two-month soft patch. The think-tank says its help-wanted index for January jumped a strong 10 per cent, with 25 of 27 metro areas posting increases.

The index suggests Canada returned to positive job growth in February after shedding 22,000 workers in January. The Conference Board research shows labour markets remain tightest in the West, particularly Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary and Edmonton.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

File-sharing

Legal threats prompt Pirate Bay to leave Sweden

Embattled file-sharing site The Pirate Bay is looking for safe havens in Norway and Spain after its Swedish host came under legal pressure to shut it down.

The Swedish Pirate Party, a small political party advocating transparency and freedom online, has provided Internet access to the site for the past three years.

But it's handing over those duties to sister parties in Norway and Spain's Catalonia region following legal threats from the Rights Alliance, a Swedish anti-piracy group representing the entertainment industry.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR
97.43¢
(+0.12¢)

TSX
12,660.44 (+9.57)

OIL
$92.63 US (-48¢)

GOLD
$1,615.50 US (+$28.90)

Natural gas: $3.45 US (+4¢)
Dow Jones: 13,900.13 (+115.96)

Never mind horsemeat — in South Africa, mystery beef includes donkey

Misrepresented meat. New study found 68 per cent of samples contained species not declared on label

Horrified that these cute little fellas might end up in so-called beef products? They're probably not happy about it either. Food scientists in South Africa have found undeclared donkey, water buffalo and goat in processed meat products, thus confirming that the EU is not alone in the battle against mislabelling.

GETTY IMAGES FILE

Worried about horsemeat in your beef? Try water buffalo, donkey and goat. South African food scientists said they have found all three in mislabelled foods including beef burgers, ground beef and sausages.

A study published by three professors at Stellenbosch University found that 68 per cent of 139 samples contained species not declared on the product label, with the highest incidence in sausages, burger patties and deli meats.

The study found soya and gluten were not labelled in 28 per cent of products tested, and undeclared pork in 37 per cent and chicken in 23 per cent.

"This study confirms that the mislabelling of processed meats is commonplace in South Africa and not only violates food-labelling regulations but also poses economic, religious, ethical and health impacts," said co-author Prof. Louwrens C. Hoffman.

He said tests the past two weeks on hundreds of samples of imported meat have found no horsemeat.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Quoted

"There's nothing wrong with eating donkey if you like donkey, but if you don't, you have the right to know."

Prof. Louwrens C. Hoffman

iTunes. Apple settlement to award $100M in credits

Apple has agreed to give more than $100 million in iTunes-store credits to settle a lawsuit alleging that the iPhone and iPad maker improperly charged kids for playing games on their mobile devices.

The two-year-old case centres on allegations that Apple didn't create adequate parental controls to prevent children from buying extra features while playing free games on iPhones and iPads in 2010 and 2011.

Parents who filed the lawsuit in 2011 said they didn't realize their children were racking up the charges until they received bills or other notifications after the purchases were made. The games that had been downloaded were designed for kids as young as four years old, according to the lawsuit.

Apple introduced more stringent controls governing in-game purchases as part of a March 2011 update to the software that runs its mobile devices. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Oversharing financial data puts young adults at risk

Many young Canadians are oversharing their financial information, says a new survey that found nearly half of 18- to 34-year-old respondents admitting they take risks like texting their credit- or debit-card numbers.

The poll by Visa Canada found that 45 per cent of this demographic group also shared their payment-card information via email, loaned their cards and didn't keep their PIN confidential.

This behaviour mirrors similar habits of sharing personal information on social-media sites, said Gord Jamieson, head of payment-system risk at the credit-card company. "Yet they're really not totally aware of who has access to this information and who else can be seeing this information and what would be done with it," he said.

The survey, released Tuesday, marks the start of fraud-prevention month in March.

Individuals in the 18-34 group also reported the highest level of online sharing activities, including keeping an open profile on a social-network site and posting to it daily, publicly sharing photos and posting their employment history. "Just be careful what you put out there," Jamieson said, noting that public Wi-Fi networks for mobile devices aren't necessarily secure.

Older generations tend not to overshare quite as much.

Among those aged 35 and older, the survey found that 32 per cent reported taking risks with their payment-card information. This group also reported less sharing of personal information online.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Coincidence? Likely not

43%

The survey found that 43 per cent of those who engaged in behaviour such as sharing payment-card information or loaning their card had experienced some kind of fraud.

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LISTEN UP, LANGUAGE POLICE

JUST SAYIN'
Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

Le gouvernement du Québec is in trouble because its overzealous language police tried to ban the word "pasta" from the menu of an Italian restaurant.

"Pâtes" doesn't quite have the same ring, but it's all part of a legitimate effort to preserve the French language in the face of creeping … Italian.

Of course, the story went viral and now le gouvernement is calling off les chiens.

Trying to write in both official languages is exhausting. So I'm stopping. Maintenant, er, now.

The point is that taking care of the language is a thankless task. We should worry less about giving our francophone cousins a tough time about their vigilance and concentrate on our own English-language transgressions, which are légion.

New linguistic tack

The ultimate tipoff that you're dealing with a suspected language violator is "tact," which actually means "diplomacy," but is often used as a word meaning "tactic" or "approach."

In fact, Quebec has given me a good idea. I'm going to assemble my own language police and send violation notices by Twitter, which should make me even more popular than usual.

The hardest thing is where to start. If we ban the use of the word "like" except in its proper context, that is: "I like ice cream," an entire generation will be struck dumb. Same with other ubiquitous language shrapnel such as "Oh, my God" and "awesome," which is not.

As bad as those are, they're nothing compared to the battery of baloney designed to make the user appear smarter or more well-read. Regardez: "Irregardless," which is a faux gilding of the lily known as "regardless."

The ultimate tipoff that you're dealing with a suspected language violator is "tact," which actually means "diplomacy," but is often used as a word meaning "tactic" or "approach." Tact is short for tactic, no? The shortest distance between two ideas?

No.

The actual term is "tack," which is a nautical term for an effective way to make forward progress into a headwind. Once you've learned to tack, you'll never go back. But we need to deal sternly with all those clever tacticians if we're to make any headway.

The biggest challenge for my new Grammar Gendarmes, I predict, will be jargon, which is a mélange (stop that!) of acronyms and catchy phrases that make the offender sound as if he's speaking Esperanto from a script by Steve Jobs.

For example: "POTUS will do his due diligence and nominate from within his own wheelhouse for the next SCOTUS vacancy." Even l'office québécois de la langue française would have trouble figuring out if that's English, Italian or Klingon. That's punditry gone wild, and should read: "After careful consideration, the U.S. president will nominate a political ally to fill the next vacancy on the Supreme Court."

America is suffering from a language recession and may be a lost cause. But ici Canada, we still maintiens le droit. Vive la difference!

Memo: When referring to any type of cooked noodle in Quebec, choose pâtes over pasta. TIMOTHY HIATT/GETTY IMAGES

A giant leap of fate

ULET IFANSASTI/GETTY IMAGES

Ancient tradition

Boys become men in stone jumping

You'd call it a leap of faith, but for youngsters in rural Indonesia, it's more a leap of their fate.

In Orahili Fau village, Nias Island, some 1,200 kilometres northwest of Jakarta, young men take part in stone jumping, "fahombo batu," a manhood ritual of leaping over stone towers — a feat which in the past has resulted in serious injury and death. METRO

Stone tradition

Nias Island is last megalithic culture

The island of Nias, dominated by mountainous terrain and ravines, has been described as having one of the world's last megalithic cultures.

Until the 1950s, locals would erect monoliths, "owasa," used for ceremonies. Experts have never found stone-jumping sites elsewhere in Indonesia, pointing to the island's uniqueness in the megalithic tradition. METRO

Size of the stone

2.5

metres is the height of this column. The intrepid youth, dressed in traditional warrior garb, run up and hop on a small, round stone to gain momentum and height before soaring feet first over the block. In the past, the block was topped with sharpened bamboo stakes. The centuries-old practice of stone jumping first began when intertribal wars were rife. Every valiant fighter would be able to leap over the high stone walls of a rival village, fringed with bamboo stakes across the top.

Past traditions gone

Count number of jumps, not heads

In traditional Nias society, "mangani binu" (decapitation of enemies) was a principal ritual for young men.

Nowadays, instead of the number of skulls a person acquired determining one's social status, it is based on how many stones could be jumped over. But the use of traditional weapons in local ceremonies is a reminder of this ritual. METRO

Metropolitan Panel

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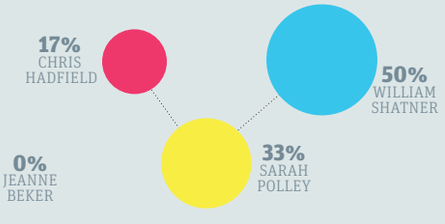
Which of these prominent Canadians should cross over into politics?



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@Rosie_Ryan_:
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@DevenaMahabir:
They're making a new Titanic? Oh like it wasn't bad enough the first one sank now they're trying to relive it !?

@JohnThibodeau:
Bye bye Eric Cole. #Habs won't tolerate half-milers anymore. Welcome back Michael Ryder. I'll try to forget those years in Boston if u will

metro

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21 and Over

Birthdays are universal

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse
scene@metronews.ca

Paris Hilton once said, "The way I see it, you should live everyday like it's your birthday." Of course she would think that way. She's young. And rich.

Like death and taxes, birthdays are one of the events that touch everyone's lives. Not everyone loves to celebrate getting older — "There is still no cure for the common birthday," said John Glenn — but Hollywood seems to enjoy throwing birthday parties — on screen at least. This weekend in 21 & Over a med school student makes merry on his birthday with two of his besties. But like so many movie birthday parties it goes horribly wrong — or horribly right if you have a taste for humiliation, extreme drunkenness and debauchery.

Horror movies have frequently used birthday parties as a backdrop for terror. The alien invasion movie Signs made Bravo's 100 Scariest Movie Moments list for a scene showing news footage of an alien at a child's birthday party in Brazil.

The film Logan's Run is set in an idyllic future. There's just one huge drawback — on your 21st birthday you will be vaporized into a sticky goo during a ritual called the Carousel.

Not all movie birthdays are bummers, however.

Despite hiring a drunken clown to perform at his nephew Miles's (Macaulay Culkin) birthday, Uncle Buck, played by the late, great John Candy, does the best he can to throw a great birthday party. The best part? He makes giant pancakes — they're so extreme they now have their own Facebook page with 290 likes — boasting, "You should see the toast. I couldn't even get it through the door!"

Miles Teller, left, Justin Chon and Skylar Astin star in Relativity Media's 21 & Over. HANDOUT

Miles Teller draws the line at French kissing

21 & Over. Star had difficult time agreeing to some scenes in new movie

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Miles Teller insists he's generally game for anything once he's signed on to a film, but as he learned on 21 & Over — the directorial debut of The Hangover writers Jon Lucas and Scott Moore — there were some lengths to which Teller wasn't quite willing to go for the sake of comedy.

Diving right into the nudity issue, there are a few very bold scenes for you in this. How do you psyche yourself up for that?
Or not. I mean, I know when you read the script or agree to do a movie, you know you're going to agree to do everything. The nudity stuff, I just made sure I worked out, you know what I mean? Because some movies you don't have time. You can work out before a movie, but then when you're shooting there's really no time. I know some actors do it, and people should really give them credit because they're working 14 hours a day, it's exhausting, and then working out and getting like five hours of sleep. It's pretty tough. So for this I just made sure I worked out, and the (guy-on-guy) kissing scene was something I tried to get rid of for a while. I was literally like pretty upset about that. And then we did it and it was just like CPR.

You were upset about it?
Kiss a guy? Yes. Inevitably, I did it for comedy. But they wanted me to use the tongue and I said, "Nope. It's not that funny, man."

These guys are known for going pretty far for a joke. Was there anything else where you had to draw the line?
No. I mean, there was a point where me and Skylar were shackled up and were getting spanked. At one point the shackle broke, so I had to bend over and fix it and s—, and there was all these girls around, and I was just like, "I'm sorry about some a— hole." Then I just went down and fixed it. Other than that, I felt pretty safe. The humour that these guys write, they're both extremely intelligent. And it's funny, it's well-written, it's not, like, dumb comedy. I never felt like I was doing cheesy or manipulative stuff. I felt pretty comfortable with everything.

What's your own most dramatic drinking anecdote?
I just remember the only time I had alcohol poisoning, when I was literally puking black, and I was just like, "This is bad." Nothing black should ever come out of your body, you know what I mean? Especially out of your mouth. There's some crazier s— I'm sure, but if you remember it then it probably wasn't that good.

How did your own college experience compare to this?
Not at all. I mean, NYU is just, like, New York. I mean, New York is your college campus, and when I was in college I smoked a lot of weed and played a lot of FIFA. That was pretty much what I did. But I grew up in Florida. Florida State's a pretty stereotypical party college. Anywhere in the South, anywhere in the sun with a college with a good sports team is going to be fun.

Nicholas Hoult having Giant success

Movies. Fresh off Warm Bodies, actor appears in Jack the Giant Slayer and X-Men: Days of Future Past

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Ewan McGregor, left, Eleanor Tomlinson and Nicholas Hoult star in Jack The Giant Slayer. DANIEL SMITH/WARNER BROS. PICTURES/MCT

Nicholas Hoult has already had plenty of success this year with last month's zombie rom-com, Warm Bodies, but now he's on to a much bigger adventure as Jack in Jack the Giant Slayer, director Bryan Singer's take on the classic tale. Plus, he has another little comic book movie with Singer lined up next.

When you finally get a horse-riding role, it's one of those signs that you've made it.
I don't know if I've necessarily made it, but it's very cool to be a part of a film of this scale. People often say they can ride a horse even when they can't, even when they've never sat on a horse in their life. It's just a given. You read anyone's C.V. and it will say that they can ride a horse. And then if they get a horse-riding role then they'll panic and try and learn to ride quickly.

You learned to ride for this movie, correct?
Yeah, I'd done a tiny bit before. But I had no control over the horse. I tried the approach of kind of having a mutual relationship of understanding between both parties whereby we'd trust each other and I'd be kind to the horse ... rather than try to be in control, which is apparently the wrong approach. It was not so great. People kept on being like, "Nick, you've got to kick the horse harder so it knows who's boss." And I'd be like, "Well, it's a lot bigger than me. I don't want to kick this animal."

Congratulations on the success of Warm Bodies. Have you noticed any palpable changes in your life now that you have a hit movie out?
Not particularly. To be honest with you, that weekend I went down to Africa to start shooting a film down there and then got back yesterday morning, so I was kind of kept out of it a little bit.

You're going back to work with Bryan Singer again with X-Men: Days of Future Past.
He's a really talented director and really knowledgable about film, and can really break down stories and characters and understands how to move a story forward at all times. He's fantastic in the X-Men world, really understands it. I haven't spoken to him in-depth about this next one yet, but I know he's really excited about it, and that's a great sign. I'm looking forward to playing that role again.

The new film seems to mix actors from different time periods of the franchise, like Ian McKellan and Ellen Page, then you and Jennifer Lawrence. Are you giving much thought to how you'll be interacting with them yet?
You know what, the odd thing was it was fantastic doing our version, First Class, but suddenly this time when I heard that Hugh Jackman and Ian McKellan and Patrick Stewart and those guys were coming back and that I was going to be in it, it suddenly became a much more real X-Men film in many ways — as much as ours did when we were doing it, we were all new to it and it was a different time and take on it. So to be part of one of the films with all those characters is going to be really exciting for me as a fan.

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Never underestimate a romance film's power of persuasion

Beautiful Creatures. Co-stars needed a second pitch to sign on to the film

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

It took a lot of convincing for young co-stars Alden Ehrenreich and Alice Englert to sign on to Beautiful Creatures, the movie adaptation of the popular young adult romance novel by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl.

In fact, both Ehrenreich and Englert initially passed on the project. "The reason I didn't want to be a part of it was the way that it had been pitched to me, it didn't sound like its own movie," Ehrenreich explains. "It sounded like they were just trying to capitalize on this genre, and because of that it wouldn't be something that was personal."

But a second look at the script and a sit-down with writer-director Richard LaGravenese helped persuade Ehrenreich, who got his start in Tetro by Francis Ford Coppola.

"He kind of explained to me that everyone he had assembled at that point with the cast and the crew, everyone was intent on making a movie like this but in a way that you hadn't seen before and with more intelligence and humour than you usually see," Ehrenreich says. "So that really appealed to me, and then I was just so grateful that I was still able to get in the film."

That initial hesitation to wade into the Twilight-like young adult waters also helped Ehrenreich and British co-star Englert bond.

"We both had a mutual respect I think because of that skepticism we'd both had originally about the project," he says. "And Richard liked that about us and we liked that about each other."

One thing Englert doesn't like, though, is that people keep calling her a poet, thanks to stories LaGravenese has been telling about her.

"I scribble in a notebook. I'm just like a normal 18-year-old girl," she says, downplaying the notion. "This is the thing, I would never possibly be able to say that. I love poetry, I'm very passionate about it, so I'm all the more embarrassed to think that people think I call myself that."

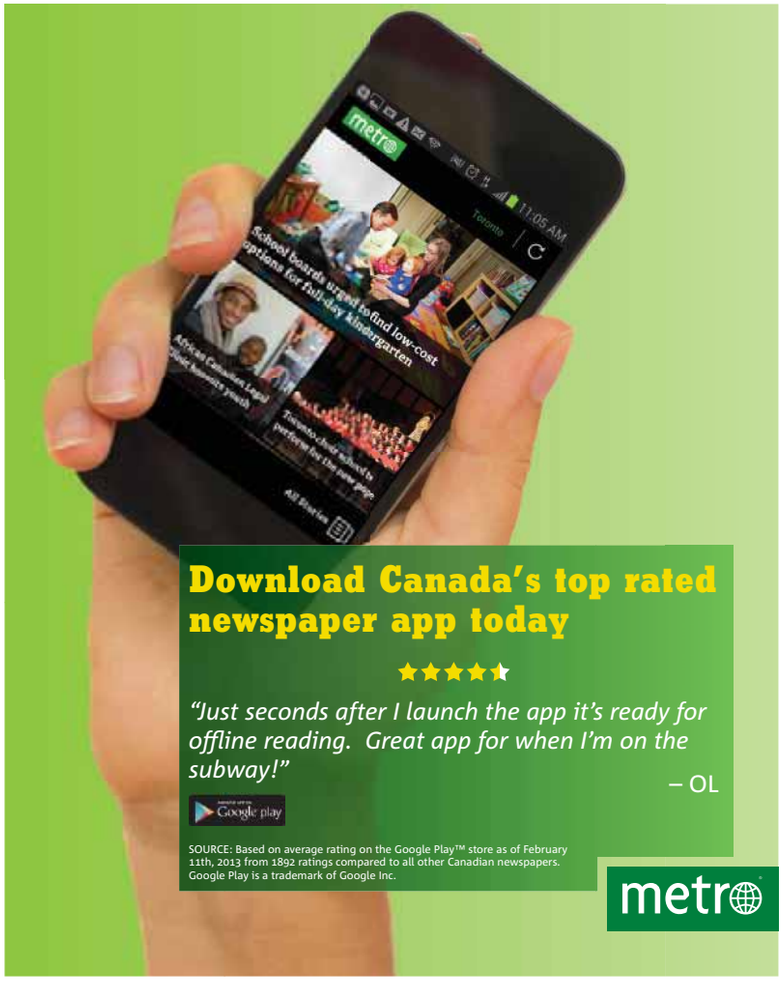
But Englert is a singer-songwriter. A track she wrote while filming the movie made it onto the Beautiful Creatures soundtrack.

Alden Ehrenreich and Alice Englert. HANDOUT

Artistic cast

And Englert insists she's not the only artist in the cast, citing Ehrenreich's drawing and painting abilities — something LaGravenese boasts of as well. "He does these great ugly drawings of people, which are great," Englert says. "They are. No one looks good in an Alden drawing." Ehrenreich confirms this fact. "No, no one does," he says. "My mom has been very upset with me for them."

"It was amazing. I mean, just like one of those things that you can't really hope for," she says. "Because I recorded it in the bathroom of the apartment I was staying in in the warehouse district of New Orleans on Garage Band on a computer. And then Richard heard it and liked it and we re-recorded it, but then he wanted to use my terrible bathroom version. So that's in the film."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Breaking Bad. TV show donates actors' clothing to shelter's thrift store

Aaron Paul, left, Jonathan Banks, Bryan Cranston and Giancarlo Esposito in a scene from Breaking Bad. URSULA COYOTE/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The AMC hit TV series Breaking Bad about the methamphetamine wars in Albuquerque is helping the city's homeless.

New Mexico's largest emergency shelter says the show recently donated boxes of clothing worn by cast members in past episodes.

Joy Junction, CEO Jeremy Reynalds, says the clothing will be sold at the shelter's thrift store beginning Wednesday, and proceeds will go toward the Albuquerque-based shelter.

Reynalds says donated clothing also will give Breaking Bad fans an opportunity to buy pieces of show memorabilia.

Breaking Bad follows Walter White, played by Bryan Cranston, producing and selling methamphetamine with a former student, Jesse Pinkman, played by Aaron Paul.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dancing with the Stars. Latest edition ready to two-step and waltz on TV

A gold-medal figure skater, a country music legend and a kooky comedian are stepping their way onto Dancing with the Stars.

ABC says Dorothy Hamill, Wynona Judd and Andy Dick are among 11 contenders for the mirrored ball on the new season of the celebrity dance competition.

Other famous faces include stand-up comic and actor D.L. Hughley, Baltimore Ravens football player Jacoby Jones and former American Idol contestant Kellie Pickler.

The new season kicks off on ABC on March 18.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Singer Kellie Pickler is one of 11 contestants on the next Dancing with the Stars. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Big Brother gets a Canadian sibling

Reality TV. Franchise stays true to classic formula, but with a few Canuck twists

As the guests move into the camera-rigged house of Big Brother Canada, executive producer John Brunton is already predicting a breakout star: 21-year-old funky fashion stylist Gary Levy.

The outspoken reality show guru touted a diverse cast of off-the-wall Canucks seeking fame and a modest fortune on the inaugural season of the homegrown spinoff starting Wednesday, singling out the Toronto contender as one to watch.

"Gary is a superstar," Brunton gushed in a recent interview after 15 house guests were announced.

"I'll make a prediction: I predict that Gary is going to have a gigantic career after he leaves the Big Brother house, whenever that might be. That guy is 100 per cent original. He is delightful."

Levy describes himself as "funky, outgoing, fabulous" in an online biography for the Big Brother Canada website. He says his strategy is to "be really social and friendly" so that he can get information on his rivals and possibly use that against them.

His competitors include 27-year-old dental hygienist Emerald (Topaz) Brady of Toronto, 26-year-old web content curator Peter Brown of Surrey, B.C., and 36-year-old Suzette Amaya of Vancouver, who also caught Brunton's eye.

The aboriginal cast member is a mother of three who bills herself as "outgoing, thoughtful and funny" and "an uber fan" of the franchise. Brunton simply describes her as "somebody who really blows my mind. She just ticks off so many boxes in the 'good person' department.

"But she's not in any way what some people might assume to be ... a person who's grown up on a reservation and come off it. She just breaks all stereotypes."

Whether such nice-guy attributes will be a help or hindrance has yet to be seen.

The franchise — based on the original Dutch series Big Brother — sends house guests packing after weekly physical and intellectual competitions. But it's the sometimes explosive personality clashes that often seal a contender's fate.

Canada's inaugural batch of house guests have plenty of personality, but Shaw Media boss Barbara Williams says they weren't necessarily cast for their potential to cause drama.

"It was much more about the magnetism that someone just projects, who has just real presence in a room, real presence on a screen and then mixing up a whole range of those types of people who you just know ... will be able to hold their own in a house like that," says Williams.

The Canuck crew is notably young — 12 of the 15 house guests are in their 20s.

The youngest is 20-year-old aspiring actress Danielle Alexander of Calgary, a former competitive gymnast who says she's confident she can handle the physical challenges. The oldest is 38-year-old Andrew Monaghan of Halifax, an insurance sales trainer who says he plans to hide his age.

Brunton says the group is nonetheless culturally, economically and regionally diverse. Some come from well-to-do families, others pulled themselves up from their bootstraps, some are country bumpkins while others are city slickers.

"You've got people that are still living with their moms and dads, maybe longer than they should, and you've got other people that are out in the world at a very young age trying to crack it and make it in a big competitive world."

Of course, the moment they enter the house contenders can pretend to be whoever they want — lying, back-stabbing and deal-making have become staple strategies in other incarnations.

Each week, the house guests vote to evict one of their own until two remain. The winner will be chosen by the last seven evicted players, known as the Big Brother jury. The grand prize is $100,000, a $25,000 gift card for The Brick and a Chevrolet Trax. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canadian, eh?

Comparisons to the popular U.S. version of the show are inevitable.

- There will be classic challenges from the franchise, as well as challenges that are "very Canadian," according to executive producer John Brunton.
- "There is going to be an enormous amount of Canadian flavour, just by the nature of the people that we put in that house," he says.
- Viewers will also have the chance to affect what happens on the show online. And footage from the house will be streamed 24-hours-a-day for free at bigbrothercanada.ca.
- Shaw Media boss Barbara Williams says it's time Canada put its mark on the global franchise, which aired 25 formats in 87 countries in 2011 and continues to expand into new territories.

Show times

Big Brother Canada debuts Wednesday on Slice and Global.

- Hosted by Arisa Cox, the series will regularly air Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays on Slice.
- Big Brother Canada After Dark also debuts Wednesday on Slice. It airs seven days a week from 2 a.m. to 5 a.m. ET.

Actor turns vain, oversexed character into fan favourite

New Girl. TV show took a chance with over-the-top Schmidt, but Max Greenfield has won over fans and earned award nominations

Actor Max Greenfield from the Fox comedy series New Girl.
DAN HALLMAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Max Greenfield, who's been nominated for an Emmy and a Golden Globe for his role as Schmidt on the Fox comedy New Girl, says he isn't worried about being typecast.

The idea makes him laugh.

"I don't think anybody was ever going to put me in Winter's Bone anyway," the 32-year-old actor said. "You know what I mean? I don't think if they were making a very dramatic, serious movie, they were going to think, 'You know, I really like Max Greenfield, but Schmidt is just ... it's too much of a THING to put him in that movie.'"

New Girl stars Zooey Deschanel as a young woman with three male roommates, played by Greenfield, Jake Johnson and Lamorne Morris.

Schmidt is a vain, oversexed ladies' man with obsessive-compulsive disorder. He makes frequent references to his Jewish heritage. The character could be unlikable, but Greenfield's portrayal of Schmidt makes many viewers root for him.

Fans tweet Greenfield's lines while the show airs. And Greenfield garners respect from his peers.

"I want to live in a world where the only person I see or interact with is Schmidt," actress Mindy Kaling tweeted last year. Gwyneth Paltrow wrote in her newsletter, GOOP, that she "fell in TV love" with the character. Greenfield now occasionally contributes to GOOP.

Greenfield worried before New Girl debuted in 2011 that viewers would dislike Schmidt.

"I thought, 'There's a good chance that I'll never work again after this.' I mean, we've played him in such a way that this could go terribly wrong, and then we started to air and the response was so positive. It kind of affirmed all the things that the writers were doing, all the things that I was doing. I think it said to everyone, 'We're on the same page. We can keep moving forward.' And then they just went crazy with it."

Schmidt's first name hasn't been revealed, and Greenfield hopes it never will be, unless it's done in a clever way, like if the character gets married.

"I'm just thinking of this now, but what a smart move this would be. 'Will you (first name) Schmidt take ...' and that's the moment she goes, 'That's your first name?' That would be a nice moment. Under a chuppah."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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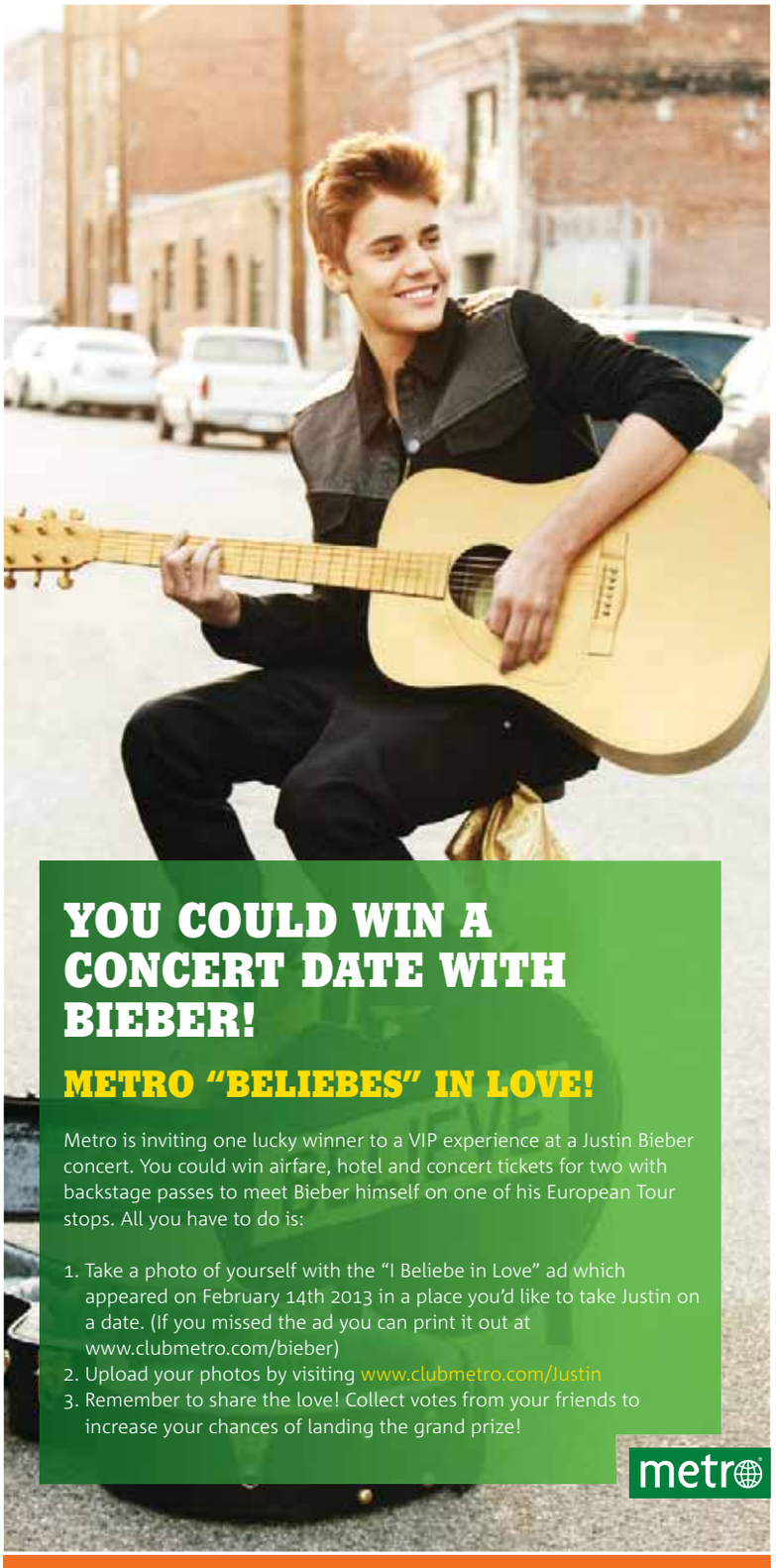
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Lonerism for the masses

Tame Impala. Band sings about sensations where it Feels Like We Only Go Backwards, but this band seems to only be going forward

PAT HEALY
Metro Boston

Kevin Parker, second from left, says the band's new album Lonerism is all about trying to interact with people. MATT SAVILLE

In print, a psychedelic band from Western Australia who call their latest album Lonerism doesn't seem like the most likely candidates to be the biggest sensation in indie rock. But Tame Impala are selling out most of the shows on the tour they are about to begin, which is their biggest trek through the U.S. to date.

"Whenever there's music where the lyrics are wearing your heart on your sleeve and talking about things that you don't really talk to anybody about — which is really just kind of music in general — but whenever you're doing it onstage, you just have that feeling that you're connecting with other people in the world that feel the same way," says singer and songwriter Kevin Parker.

The music on Lonerism ranges from heavy to melodic to focused to spacey. Sometimes it is all of those things in one song. What makes the album so exciting is that no structure is safe from being seriously messed with. The songs are all prone to either sudden unexpected explorations or sudden endings. A vicious lead guitar might step forward in the mix into what a listener might think would be a searing solo, only to have the song end two seconds later. On the song Keep On Lying, a trippy organ and guitar interlude gives way to a party conversation that makes the listener feel like an observer who wants — but just isn't able — to participate.

"I love the sound of something that makes you feel like you're on drugs," admits Parker when asked if he approves of the "stoner rock" title that his band is often tagged with.

But the song titles on "Lonerism" speak volumes for those who don't speak much: Music to Walk Home By, Why Won't They Talk To Me? and Feels Like We Only Go Backwards are just a few.

"It's really an album about other people, or at least trying to interact with people," says Parker. "I think the whole loner thing about the album is that overall the character realizes that he's destined to be alone, from all of these interactions."

PS 22, I love you

Parker says he has been surprised by how people have taken to Tame Impala though, in particular a group of school children from Staten Island whose moving reinterpretation of Feels Like We Only Go Backwards has racked up thousands of views online.

"It was pretty surreal," says Parker of watching the PS 22 Chorus perform one of his songs. "It didn't even feel like it was my song. It felt like the people doing the song, that whole thing that I was watching on the computer screen was bigger than the song, like I was covering their song. ... Kids can extract that pop element to it. It's not that only kids can do it, but it's that it can be taken out of it and you can leave behind the totally blown-out distorted drums and you can just make a nice little sing-along out of it that's really uplifting."

Broken mirrors

Tame Impala's summer single, Elephant, features one of the most badass lines in recent memory. In the song, about an overconfident, but ultimately insecure man, Parker sings, "He broke the mirrors off his Cadillac, cuz he doesn't like it looking like he looks back."

Parker says that the line was on special reserve for a while.

"I don't actually remember how I thought of it," he says.

"All I know is that I was driving home from the beach. I know where I was and it was long before I started writing lyrics for that song. I didn't have a notebook, but I just remembered that rhyme. I didn't even think it was going to fit. I had no idea how it was going to fit into a song. I then sort of sang it and put it into a sentence and it really seemed to fit well. It was one of those cosmic miracles with lyrics that don't happen very often for me."

BIG BROTHER CANADA

Music. New dad Nick Lachey helping to sing more kids to sleep with his new lullaby album

First-time dad Nick Lachey knows all about rocking a baby to sleep. Now he wants to help other kids get their rest.

His new album, A Father's Lullaby, will be released in a few weeks. It features 12 songs, including classics like You Are My Sunshine and Brahms Lullaby.

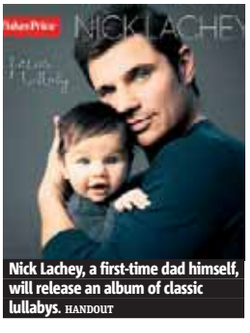
The album also features four original tracks that Lachey co-wrote, inspired by his own baby.

The 39-year-old singer and his wife, TV personality Vanessa Lachey, welcomed their son, Camden, last September.

A Father's Lullaby will be available on iTunes and Amazon on March 13. It will be in stores in April.

Lachey will release a new album, 2.0, in May with his group, 98 Degrees.

A Father's Lullaby is a partnership with Fisher-Price Inc., a subsidiary of Mattel and Mood Entertainment.



Nick Lachey, a first-time dad himself, will release an album of classic lullabys. HANDOUT

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Scared straight: Lohan could serve as motivational speaker?

In trouble. Lohan's attorney seeking an alternative to prison

Lindsay Lohan's attorney has suggested to prosecutors that the actress serve as a motivational speaker and perform non-jail activities to resolve her latest criminal case, according to a letter obtained Tuesday.

The letter from lawyer Mark Heller proposed several alternatives for Lohan, who could be sent to jail if a judge determines her actions in a traffic crash violated terms of her probation in a previous theft case. His letter states that Lohan's turbulent home life has deeply impacted her and requires a different approach in the case.

The actress plans to spend time recording public service announcements and make "periodic visits to schools, hospitals, and other venues where she may provide inspirational talks, encouraging children to pursue positive goals and avoid bad habits," states the letter filed on Friday and released by the court Tuesday.

Lohan's latest case returns to court on Friday. Heller is seeking a delay in her trial, now scheduled for March, on three misdemeanour charges of reckless driving, lying to police and obstructing officers from performing their duties, The crash occurred in June on Pacific Coast Highway while Lohan was on the way to a movie shoot. The actress could face 245 days in jail if she is found to be in violation of her probation.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lindsay Lohan attends the Mr. Pink Ginseng launch party at a hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif., in an October 2012 photo. RICHARD SHOTWELL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Ben Affleck. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

A close shave after a not-so-close (expected, really) Oscar win

Argo director Ben Affleck marked his best picture win by getting rid of the beard that has graced his face for the bulk of awards season, according to E! News.

"He did it to mark the end of a chapter," a source says about the director/actor's follicle-free face.

"It had a ceremonial quality to it."

Affleck has previously said in interviews that his young children were not fans of the facial hair, which he also sported while filming Argo.

Prince Michael Jackson

Into the spotlight: Prince getting into Hollywood

Prince Michael Jackson, the 16-year-old son of the late Michael Jackson, is wasting no time in getting into the entertainment industry. The Hollywood Reporter has learned that Jackson will make his acting debut as a guest star on 90210, playing a trauma victim on the CW drama. And just last week Jackson began working with Entertainment Tonight as a special on-air correspondent.

The Word

MacFarlane keeps on entertaining

Apparently Seth MacFarlane didn't get his need to perform out of his system at the Oscars Sunday night, as the host also took the stage for a few numbers at his private after-party in front of family and friends, according to E! News.

He also celebrated the night by getting cosy with Charlize Theron. "Charlize was very chatty with Seth and they shared a laugh in between his performances," a source says. "The party wasn't packed, but everyone seemed to be enjoying the singing and dancing."

Theron reportedly stayed at the shindig for quite a while.

METRO WORLD NEWS

Once is more than enough

It looks like it's one and done at the Oscars for Seth MacFarlane. The Family Guy creator was asked on his Twitter account whether he'd consider hosting the Academy Awards again and he replied: "No way. Lotta fun to have done it, though."

MacFarlane's edgy comedy proved a polarizing force on Sunday's Academy Awards, with jokes about domestic violence, women's bodies and Jews in Hollywood that offended some viewers.

The Oscars did get their biggest audience in three years, however, with particular growth among young viewers.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

His memorable opening song

Maybe you found Oscar host Seth MacFarlane hilarious or offensive or neither or both. Either way, you surely remember his opening number, We Saw Your Boobs. In the song, he called out Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway and other notable actresses for showing their stuff (including Jodie Foster in the rape movie The Accused — ha-ha Seth?).

Celebrity porn website Mr. Skin has now collected clips from every film mentioned. Good marketing! Timely! Gross? METRO

Anne Hathaway

Hathaway just wants to be as likeable as possible

She may have won an Oscar this week, but that doesn't mean Anne Hathaway is immune to criticism.

"It does get to me," Hathaway said of the snipes directed at her after winning the award Sunday.

"But you have to remember that there's a positive to every negative and a negative to every positive."

And a source tells Us Weekly that Hathaway was even looking to head-off her critics before the big awards show by practising her acceptance speech to make sure she came off as likeable as possible. "She was very aware that she had been the butt of everyone's jokes," a source says.

Twitter

@SethMacFarlane
My cat said the show went well.

@KirstieAlley
old women's hands look like they are wearing creepy skin gloves...I know this because they are on my hands

@realjeffreyross
How come @HuffingtonPost doesn't get excited when I show side boob? #sexist

@msleamichele
This scene I'm shooting at #Glee today requires lots and lots of crying.. At first it's therapeutic.. Then it just becomes exhausting! :(

5 reasons to visit the Florida Keys

With azure waters and a long list of big game fishing world records and tropical reef fish to see, it's no wonder author and sportsman Ernest Hemingway spent a decade of winters in the Florida Keys. The Overseas Highway, or U.S. Route 1, strings together more than 50 small islands with a swashbuckling past that rise above an ancient coral reef. Here, whether it's by sailboat or jet ski, riding on the water is the only to get around.

BY GRAHAM LANKTREE
Metro Canada

FLICKR: VASENKA

Key West

The quirky character of Key West, with its sun-drenched colours and retro '80s motel signs, finds roosters roaming public parks alongside cats and buskers. Here, Hemingway's house is now filled with a brood of 43 felines descended from six-toed Snowball, who belonged to the adventurous author. The house stands across from a 164-year-old lighthouse warning ships and their treasure about the treacherous reef shores. Ride out on the water around the island and round the tip of the southernmost point of the U.S. Spot colourful reef fish while snorkelling and you will see just how important the life aquatic is to the keys.

FLICKR: CAYABO

Big Pine Key, Bahia Honda State Park

Take the road north from Key West and enter miles of leafy mangroves growing around a series of smaller keys that the beloved manatee calls home. From the Overseas Highway, you can see the remains of the historic railroad Standard Oil partner Henry Flagler used to pave a way into the area in 1912. Entering Big Pine Key, look for an endangered white-tailed deer half the size of ones found in Canada. The most natural sandy beaches in the keys are found here, where sea sponges regularly wash up on shore at Bahia Honda State Park.

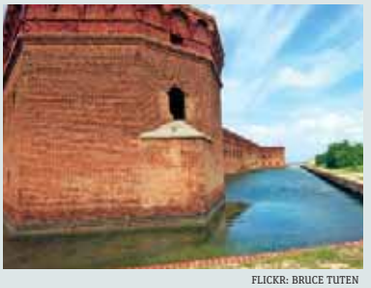
Marathon, Pigeon Key

Locals give the keys their character and on Marathon, Turtle Hospital founder Richie Moretti, a one-time mechanic, is excited to share his passion for the gentle beasts. You can visit his recovering loggerhead, Ridley and green sea turtle patients, who are then released back into the wild. Pieces of the original Flagler railway that linked the island keys in 1912 come closely into focus travelling to Marathon. Grab some lobster tacos at the Sunset Grille, a tiki bar near the Pigeon Key ferry and sip from their line of kitschy cocktails that come in collectible mugs, including the Magic Marlin and Pina' Pineapple.

FLICKR: EASYGIE

Dry Tortugas (Lower Keys)

Big Pine Key and the lower keys of Dry Tortugas National Park are unspoiled in their beauty. Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León discovered these islands 500 years ago in 1513. The hundreds of sea turtles he and his men found basking on the shoals gave the islands their name. A high speed ferry of sea plane from Key West will get you to the Tortugas, the most remote of America's National Parks. Just west of the Marquesas Keys are coral reefs where an experienced diver can feel as though they're a character in Finding Nemo.



FLICKR: BRUCE TUTEN

Key Largo

Hollywood actor Humphrey Bogart left his mark on the keys when he starred in the film noir gangster flick Key Largo. The story of Bogie holing up in a hotel during a hurricane, only to find it swarming with gangsters, became so popular the area changed its original Spanish name. It was no longer Cayo Largo, the longest key. This area is also known as the diving capital of the world. If you don't have time to take a scuba crash course, travel on a glass-bottomed boat from John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park.

FLICKR: STIG NYGAARD

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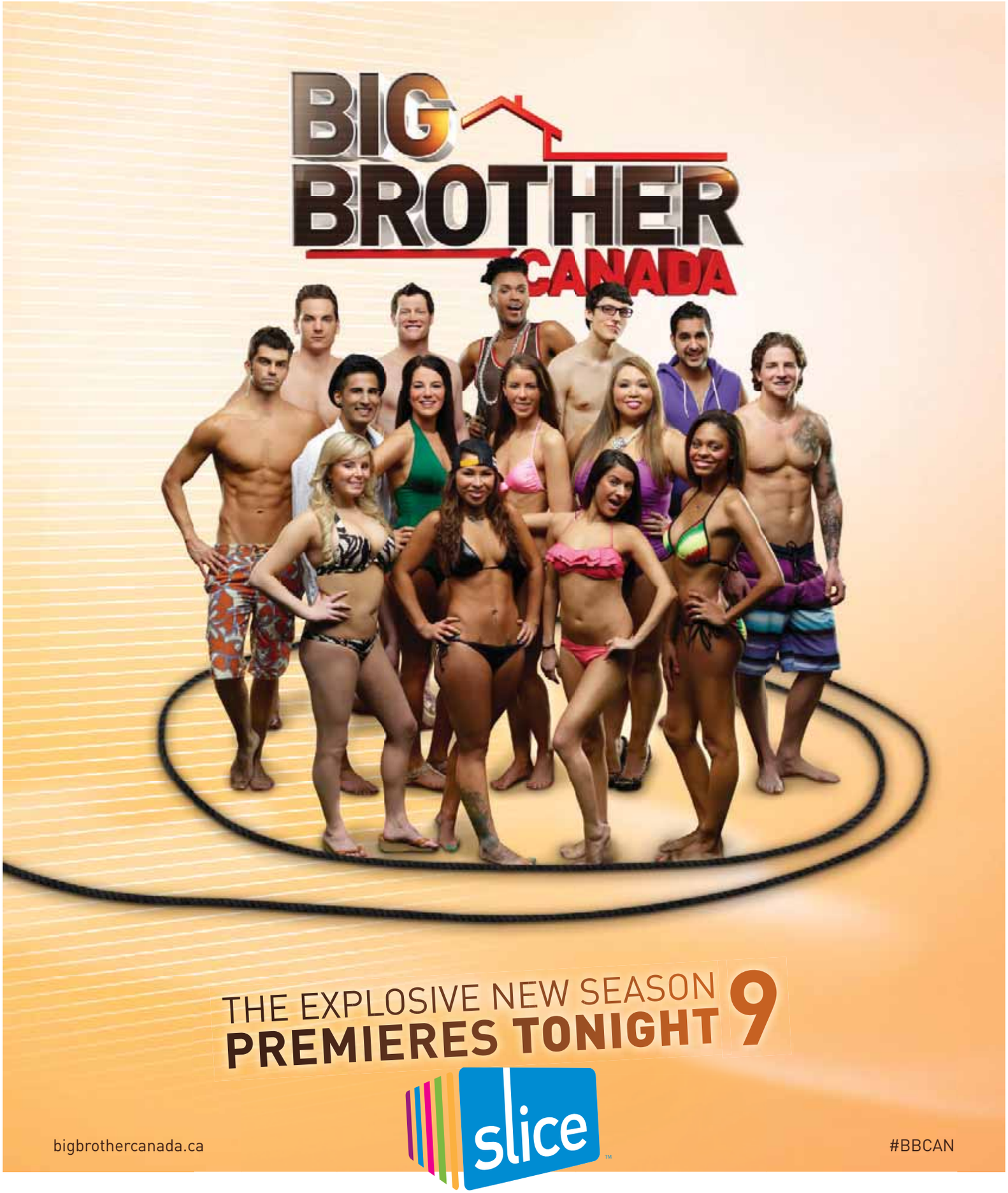

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Soak up a different side of Mexico

After a few all-inclusive vacations, you'll reach a tipping point. When you need a break from evening shows and bland buffets, these Mexico boutique hotels will exceed your expectations — in fact, you may never want to go back to resorts ever again.

KAREN KWAN
life@metronews.ca

For the foodie: Viceroy Riviera Maya

This luxe 41-room hotel in Playa del Carmen features stunning suites set in a tropical forest. Needs you didn't even realize you had will be met: enjoy a refreshing chilled towel on the beach, purify inside and out in a traditional temezcal (a.k.a sweat lodge) and have your sunglasses cleaned while lounging in a canopied sunbed. Your only concern here? What delicious food to order. Chef Jetzabel Rojas serves a menu of authentic Mexican dishes including pastel azteca (think layers of tortilla, chicken, corn and sour cream) for breakfast at the beachside Coral Grill.

ALL PHOTOS HANDOUTS

For the activities lover: Hotel B

For a fun, beach house vibe, get yourself to Hotel B in Cozumel. The modest rooms are outweighed by phenomenal views of the Caribbean sea (nearly all 41 rooms face the ocean) along with the blissful infinity pool and Jacuzzi. Morning yoga classes are offered daily, as are workshops — topics range from photography and ceviche to tequila tastings and craft making — and you can snorkel right in front of the property. Souvenir hunters will not have to look far for local items; all of the art and crafts, such as hand-carved figurines and brightly woven baskets, in the rooms and around the hotel are sourced from Mexican artisans and are available for sale.

For the relaxation seeker: Villa Rolandi

A more laidback pace goes hand in hand with island living and Isla Mujeres is no exception. Leave your stress at the dock in Cancun as Villa Rolandi's private yacht, Cocoon, whisks you over to the secluded 35-room hotel. The hotel boasts three pools, including one oversized saltwater hot tub, a private beach and one of the few Thalasso spas in Mexico (it's also equipped with a Vichy shower). Rent a golf cart (the preferred mode of transportation here) to take a tour around the one-mile-wide by five-miles-long island. Plan for at least one meal at the hotel's Casa Rolandi restaurant; the fresh seafood carpaccio makes it a worthy pit stop.

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STEPHANIE GRAY
life@metronews.ca

The luxurious Iberostar Varadero in Varadero, Cuba. FLICKR: MATTJP

For luxury seekers: Paradisus Cancun, Mexico
Anyone in search of A-list treatment needs to look no further than the newly opened Paradisus Cancun. Opt for royal service, which includes the assistance of a personal butler, guaranteed reservations at restaurants, plus access to a private beach area and pool — complete with your own concierge who is at your beck and call.

The star service doesn't end there either, with 24-hour room service, bottomless Margaritas and an on-site spa. You'll never want your vacation to end.

For families: Iberostar Varadero, Cuba
The white sand beach is just the beginning for this five-star beachfront resort that contains all of the all-inclusive amenities you'd expect, plus extras for bringing along the little ones. The biggest perk is one child under 13 stays and eats free when sharing a room with two adults.

During the day when you're in need of some quiet time, they can have their own fun in the Mini-Club, a supervised play area for kids aged four to 12.

For couples: Secrets St. James Montego Bay, Jamaica
A peaceful, oceanfront resort, it's all about self-indulgence here. No wristbands, restaurant reservations or anyone under the age of 18, for starters.

Unlimited isn't used lightly here, from top-shelf drinks at every bar to 24-hour room service best used when the thought of leaving your bed feels like too much effort.

Get even more extras, like sparkling wine and discounted spa treatments, when booking a honeymoon or anniversary package.

For adventurers: Flamingo Beach Resort & Spa Guanacaste, Costa Rica
Room-only or all-inclusive, this resort is the ultimate basecamp for exploring the region's diverse setting from volcano hikes and canopy zip-lining to taking a dip in natural hot springs. A short boat ride from the resort you'll find one of the country's top diving spots at the Catalina Islands. Staying onsite isn't too shabby either with rentals for ATVs, kayaks, and paddle boards available by the hour.

For golfers: Meliá Caribe Tropical All Inclusive Beach & Golf Resort, Punta Cana, Dominican Republic
Why you should go: Not every all-inclusive can boast having a world-class 27-hole championship golf on their property. Multiple rounds of golf are included in most packages, with an additional fee for the golf cart. When your tee time is over you can ruminate over the game with a cocktail at one of their 14 bars or dine at one of 13 restaurants. And if it's your tan you plan on working on, there are 10 pools to lounge by, or better yet, pull up a lounge chair on the sandy white beach — oceanview included.

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On the move

Villas aren't just for the wealthy

ON THE MOVE
Loren Christie
life@metronews.ca

A villa vacation sounds like something only the rich and famous can afford. But it can be a cost-effective way to put a roof over your head and experience local culture. If you're thinking of taking the plunge, consider the following:

Pick a destination where supply exceeds demand. Islands like Barbados offer amazing deals at incredible properties in non-peak months like June, July and August.

Go with a group. I'm off to Italy in September and staying in a six-bedroom, six-bathroom villa complete with three kitchens, garden and outdoor swimming pool. With 12 of us sharing the cost, it comes to $383 per person for the week. The trick is making sure everyone's expectations are met.

Is an agency the best way to go? Maybe. In addition to helping you through the options, they can offer extra services like helping to arrange tours or advise of attractions in the area.

If you prefer to do it yourself there are several good owner-direct websites, which include villas. HomeAway.ca has more than 85,000 listings. You may save some money by leaving out the middle man, but make sure to vet your holiday home. Get a floor plan with photos, references from past renters and verify the headcount. Ensure that "sleeps eight" doesn't mean one couple ends up in a set of child's bunk beds.

Dublin isn't cheap. But the flat, compact Irish capital is exceptionally walkable, with a wide range of free attractions easily reached on foot from any downtown hotel. Live music might cost no more than the pint that's probably in your hand. And exhilarating seaside hikes with a salty breeze are just a 15-minute train trip away.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

5 things to do in Dublin

SHAWN POGATCHNIK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

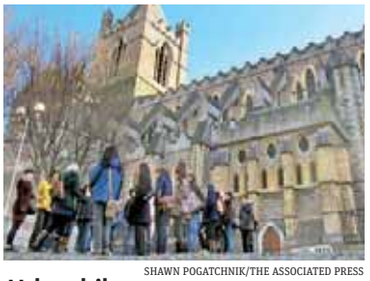
Parks

No visitor escapes Dublin without walking through its heart, St. Stephen's Green, where in summertime there are frequent music performances. But don't miss the two nearby parks inside Merrion Square and Fitzwilliam Square, both surrounded by some of Europe's best-preserved Georgian-era properties with massive doorways and semicircular glass tops.

SHAWN POGATCHNIK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Museums

It does rain in Dublin. Fortunately all of Ireland's state-funded museums are free and most are beside each other, surrounding Ireland's parliament building, Leinster House, which itself can be toured weekdays. Next door, the National Library this year features exhibits on James Joyce and W.B. Yeats, including many of the poet's letters and unfinished works. The National Gallery is partly closed this year, but a special exhibition on Yeats' travel sketchbooks is worth a look. No fan of the Yeatses? The National Museum of Ireland has three Dublin bases, all free.



SHAWN POGATCHNIK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Urban hikes

Dublin Tourism offers free downloadable podcasts and maps to help you explore the city's urban heart and the castles and coastlines of nearby suburbs. Most popular is the route from Trinity College to the Guinness brewery, but the podcasts spur you to every corner of the map — exploring themes from Vikings to James Joyce's Ulysses. And don't worry about paying for Internet on the trot. Dublin City Council has just launched a network of free wi-fi hotspots.

Pub music

There's zero chance you'll complete these wanderings without stopping in numerous public houses. And no, the beverages inside are never free. But traditional Irish music often is. The most famous pub for live "trad" performances is O'Donoghue's, a living room-sized venue that inspired the Dubliners and Chieftains in the 1960s. Other pubs also offer free performances, particularly in the Temple Bar tourist quarter, with Oliver St. John Gogarty's offering day-and-night sessions in its upstairs bar.

PETER MORRISON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SHAWN POGATCHNIK/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Coastal hikes

You're going to want to see a bit of the rest of Ireland, so pack hard-soled boots and a rainproof windbreaker. The commuter DART rail service hugs the Irish Sea coastline and can drop you at popular trailheads with ocean views. The longest recommended hike is a three-hour loop around the Howth peninsula overlooking Dublin Bay. The best local sandy beach is in posh Malahide to the north. Or head south to Bray. From its arcade-studded promenade, you can use an inland path to climb a cross-topped hill called Bray Head with views all the way to Wales.

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Oohs, aahs and butterflies

Montreal. City's former Olympic Stadium now home to the largest natural science museum complex in the world

While the sound of cheering baseball fans has been long gone from Montreal's Olympic Stadium, there is still plenty of buzz around the massive park that surrounds the facility and its landmark tower.

The excitement that followed the crack of baseball bats has been replaced by the oohs and aahs of visitors to a grouping of installations that make up what's called Space for Life.

It's described as "the largest natural science museum complex in Canada" and its various institutions welcomed 1.5 million visitors in 2012.

Executive director Charles-Mathieu Brunelle says the installations, which will soon include a new planetarium, provide a "very unique way of looking at nature and life."

"What's very, very special is you also have something that is trying to strengthen the bond that we have between humankind and nature," Brunelle said.

Remember the old Olympic Velodrome? It's now the Biodome, which features five eco-systems that include a tropical rainforest and even subarctic islands — complete with penguins.

It houses more than 4,500 animals, including 250 different species, as well as 500 plant species, all under one roof.

More than 787,000 visitors experienced its exotic climates last year, with close to 35 per cent coming from outside Quebec.

Just across the street there's the Botanical Garden, which continues to attract hundreds of thousands to its greenhouses year-round. Until April 28, it's hosting an exhibit called Butterflies Go Free. One of the garden's tropical greenhouses, with this year's monarch butterfly theme, has become home to 75 different species.

"They're from all over the world, from different farms that raise butterflies (and) every day a bunch of them will emerge from their chrysalis and then will be released in the greenhouse," said butterfly guide Kaja Verret-Holding.

About 20,000 butterflies and moths will be set free throughout the event.

Verret-Holding said many of the brilliantly coloured butterflies come from far-off places: Kenya, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Costa Rica.

More than 1.7 million visitors have taken in the butterfly experience since it was first presented in 1998.

After admiring the variety of butterflies and moths, visitors can check out the nearby Insectarium where they can get close to creepy-crawlies like beetles and furry spiders.

General admission prices to the Space for Life facilities can be purchased in-person or online. A visit to either the Biodome or the planetarium will cost $18.75 for adults, with reduced rates for students and children under 17. Visitors can get into both the Insectarium and Botanical Garden for a combined $18.75.

For each of the three options (Biodome, Planetarium and Insectarium-Botanical Garden), there's also a rate of $52.50 for a family with two adults and up to three children. Children under five are admitted free. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Botanical Garden

"We'll be releasing about 100 (butterflies) each day."

Butterfly guide Kaja Verret-Holding, on the Butterflies Go Free exhibit

Children visit the penguins at the Biodome in Montreal.
GRAHAM HUGHES/THE CANADIAN PRESS

A man looks up at a space projection at the new planetarium in Montreal.
GRAHAM HUGHES/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium

Visitors will soon get a chance to get starry-eyed with a visit to the latest addition under the Space for Life umbrella — the new Rio Tinto Alcan Planetarium, near the base of the Olympic Tower.

- The $48-million planetarium, with its two huge shiny cones pointing skyward, will officially open its doors on April 6.
- The new facility is about four times larger than the old planetarium, which occupied 2,500 square metres in a downtown square and closed in late 2011.
- Astronomer Pierre Chastenay says calling the new 10,000-square-metre planetarium "state of the art" is an understatement. "This is the best planetarium in the world — until the next one opens," he said.

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Ski the slopes and support an athlete at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort

There's still time to book a ski vacation. And why not try a unique, small mountain-town with a beautiful view

GIZELLE LAU
life@metronews.ca

Kicking Horse is the first four-season mountain resort to open in the Canadian Rockies in 25 years. HANDOUT

Make the most of what's left of winter, Canada. Get those legs moving and head out west to Golden, B.C., for a genuine boutique ski resort experience at Kicking Horse Mountain Resort. Just 2.5 hours from Calgary, the drive is certainly not a tedious one; complete with views of snow-capped mountains, heavy green conifers and frozen, bluer-than-blue waterfalls in the distance.

And if champagne powder wasn't a good enough reason to go, this winter (until May 1st) when you book a stay in Kicking Horse's Glacier Mountaineer Lodge (a Bellstar Resort), you could support local Olympic hopeful Brady Leman, a Bellstar-Resort-sponsored athlete. A World Cup Ski Cross Gold and Silver Medalist, Leman is one of Canada's biggest hopes at Sochi 2014 — and no stranger to Kicking Horse.

As the first four-season mountain resort to open in the Canadian Rockies in 25 years, Kicking Horse offers a unique, small mountain-town experience with all the skiable terrain of the big resorts. No crowds, no lineups, no parking hassles and all while boasting the third-highest vertical drop in Canada.

Up top (a 12-minute gondola ride to almost 8,000 feet), jaw-dropping panoramic views make you feel like you're on top of the world, overlooking almost all six surrounding national parks, including Banff, Glacier, Kootenay, Yoho, Mt. Revelstoke and Jasper. It just doesn't get any better than this — that is, until you get to make your way down — into cavernous bowls of fluffy white snow, winding through untouched trails, down into the puffy layer of cloud, at which point you may realize you haven't seen another skier in ages and all you can hear is the sound of your feet schussing all the way down. Now that's golden.

The lowdown

Perks. Once considered a resort exclusively for advanced skiers or snowboarders, in the past five years, Kicking Horse has developed numerous trails and lessons that are beginner and intermediate-friendly. On Sundays, Kicking Horse offers Powder Room ski clinics just for women — a great way to learn, improve and build confidence in a supportive environment.

Stay. For couples or small families, stay at Bellstar's Kicking Horse Glacier Mountain Lodge, conveniently located at the bottom of the mountain, just steps from the gondola and rental shop. For larger groups, Bellstar's Homes Collection offers large multi-family ski chalets like 1601 Cache Estates: fully furnished and stocked, complete with outdoor hot tub and a roaring gas fireplace.

More information. Go to bellstar.ca, glaciermountaineer.com or kickinghorseresort.com.

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They'll be gone in a New York minute

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These petite cheesecakes are perfect for one serving and leave none to go to waste.

They can also be ready sooner than a regular-sized cheesecake, since they chill much faster. Baking the cheesecakes in a water bath — a pan filled with water — keeps them moist and prevents them from sinking in the middle.

Serve them with fresh berries or a fruit-based dessert sauce and a dusting of icing sugar. I like to garnish with a drizzle of melted fruit sorbet, such as mango or raspberry.

1. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper muffin liners.

2. Combine the ricotta, cream cheese, sour cream, egg, vanilla, lemon juice, zest, flour and sugar in a food processor and process until smooth and creamy. Divide the mixture among the prepared muffin cups.

3. Set the muffin tin in a larger pan or on a baking sheet with sides. Pour enough hot water into the pan to come one-third to one-half up the sides of the muffin cups.

4. Bake in the centre of the oven for 20 minutes.

5. Remove the muffin tin from the water bath and cool to room temperature on a rack. Chill for 1 hour.

6. To serve, remove the paper liners and place on individual serving plates. Garnish with berries and a sprinkle of icing sugar.

ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS) BY ROSE REISMAN

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 cups smooth light ricotta
- 3/4 cup light cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 cup light sour cream
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup granulated sugar

New-York-Style Miniature Cheesecakes

This recipe makes 12 cheesecakes. BRIAN MACDONALD FROM ROSE REISMAN'S COMPLETE LIGHT KITCHEN (WHITECAP BOOKS)

Drink of the Week

Cinnabomb

A tasty explosion of three types of alcohol with ginger ale, this Cinnabomb is sure to be a crowd please at any get-together.

- .5 oz Smirnoff Vanilla Vodka
- .5 oz Grand Marnier
- .5 oz Goldschlager
- Cinnamon/sugar for rim
- Ginger ale
- Cranberries for garnish

Shake alcohol with ice in shaker.

Rim glass with cinnamon sugar. Add fresh ice to martini glass.

Strain shaker contents into fresh ice. Top with ginger ale.

Float 3 cranberries on top of ice. Add a cocktail straw and serve. **PHOTO AND RECIPE: FIRKIN PUBS, FIRKINPUBS.COM**

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Impress prospective employers with an infographic resumé

Visual data.
Attractive image-based format gives a quick view of job history

LINDSAY ROTHMAN
TalentEgg.ca

On average, employers spend somewhere around 45 seconds reviewing a resumé.

Resumé writing aims to help the employer to effortlessly extract and retain the most vital information. The art of resumé writing consists of successfully transferring the story of your professional life onto one page.

Enter the infographic, a tool that visually represents and simplifies complex data. An infographic resumé is a unique way to condense and quantify the information on your resumé. Not to mention it looks slick, contemporary and really awesome.

Cheryl Ticne, a Vancouver-based information designer and recent BCIT graduate, has developed a template for her own infographic resumé (pictured) and has been testing the efficiency of this tool in the workforce.

Ticne says she chose to try this approach to give employers an instant idea of her skills. With the endless submissions of resumés received by HR departments, the infographic resumé makes it easy to process information quickly in an organized and catchy format.

It took Ticne around three days to come up with the initial design for her resumé. "It was quite a process for me to finally have a resumé that presented me very well," she says.

This is a familiar struggle amongst job-seekers. The infographic resumé for Ticne is a perfect example of a unique, relevant, and interesting way to present your skills.

One employer even told her that her resumé was at the top of his pile due to its unique and professional esthetics.

If an employer is only going to spend 45 seconds reviewing your resumé, you better make the seconds count. How you do that is entirely up to you.

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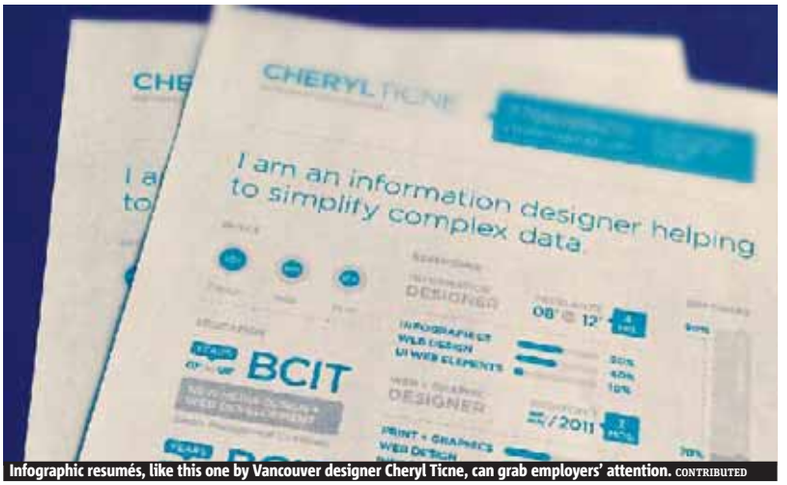

Infographic resumés, like this one by Vancouver designer Cheryl Ticne, can grab employers' attention. CONTRIBUTED

Throw away those stale cover letters

LINDSAY ROTHMAN
TalentEgg.ca

Navigating the world of resumés and cover letters is like trying to do an assignment without any guidelines from your professor.

At school, if you wrote an organized and well-researched paper, you'd get a decent—if not a great—mark.

Job hunting is a different story. Nothing has prepared you for the game of resumés and cover letters.

When you don't hear back from employers after applying, it's hard to know what needs improvement.

We recently completed a round of hiring at Influitive, the company I work for. Based on my experience, I'd like to share some resumé and cover letter tips that will help you land your next job interview.

1. Pretend you're on Twitter
If your cover letter was a tweet, what would it say? Get right to the point.

Lose the, "I'm applying for the ABC position at EFG Corporation that was posted on the student careers website of University XYZ."

Writing this sentence on Twitter would be a total waste of characters.

Instead, your cover letter should start with your pitch: "I'd be a great fit for the ABC position because XYZ."

Stop saying that you have "strong analytical skills" and instead analyze the job description, and craft some very concise and compelling statements demonstrating why you should be interviewed.

2. Ditch the R2-D2 vibe
Write a cover letter the way you would write a blog post — using a human voice.

Read your cover letter out loud. Now read a post from your blog out loud. Notice a difference? Your cover letter is written in a robotic voice that you may think sounds professional. It's not.

You invite employers to check out your blog, yet they won't click the link because they've already seen your writing via your cover letter and, let me tell you, they're not impressed.

3. Lose your laundry lists
Why does your resumé include laundry lists of each daily task you performed for all the jobs you've ever had? If you were a part-time receptionist while you were in university, anyone who looks at your resume will know that you answered the phone. What made you good at this job? How did you stand out?

Recruitment experts rant about this resumé problem all the time, yet it came up so often in the round of hiring we just did.

According to Andy Porter, HR executive and prominent recruitment blogger, candidates should pitch themselves as accomplishers as opposed to doers.

4. Stop the resumé firing squad
We all know the drill: modify a few resumé buzzwords, change the company name and job title and fire off multiple applications into cyberspace.

Instead, opt for a quality-over-quantity approach by applying to a few positions very well.

Write cover letters in a friendly tone, get rid of the laundry list of your accomplishments and you may just land a dream interview. ISTOCK PHOTO

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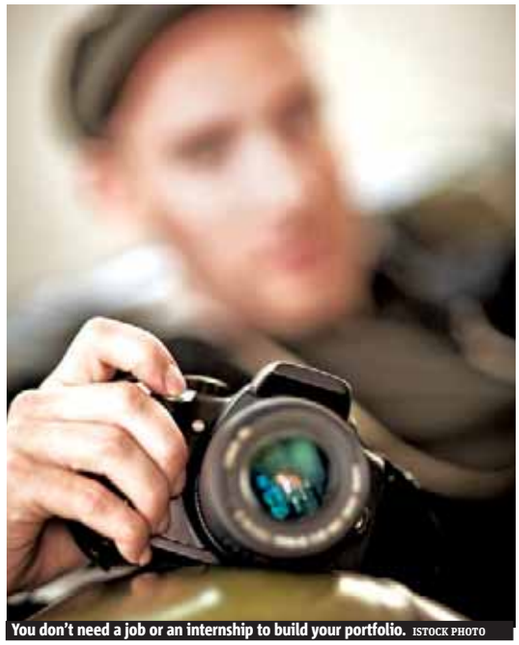
How to build an arts portfolio on the cheap

Media. Build a creative folder and get experience using various free tools

SHAHEERAH KAYANI
TalentEgg.ca


You don't need a job or an internship to build your portfolio. ISTOCK PHOTO

While finding an internship in the competitive field of the arts or media can be tough, there are things you can do on your own that will show employers you're not the type to just sit around and wait for things to happen, but rather you like to take action.

The best thing to do when you're studying in a field such as media, architecture or visual arts is to make your very own personalized creative folder that features all your work, which will act as a great tool to take along with you to interviews.

Here are a few ways you can build your portfolio on your own:

Write

Many colleges and universities have their own school newspapers, so try your best to find out how you can become a contributor.

You can often find opportunities to get writing experience outside of school, too.

Blog

Try starting up your own professional blog on free sites such as WordPress or tumblr. Make sure to keep your blog interesting and relevant, and keep up-to-date on the industry you hope to work for (but stay away from blogging on sensitive issues, such as culture, religion and politics, as you don't want to end up offending a reader).

You don't necessarily have to write all that much either — you can share videos, pictures, tweets, links, GIFs and other forms of media to express yourself.

Photography

- **Equipment.** If you love taking photos, invest in or borrow a good quality camera and embark on the endless possibilities to discover the types of digital media you can create.
- **Experiment.** If you are into event photography, snapping pics at events on your campus is perhaps the best way to develop some skills and experience in that area. Want to practice portraits? Round up friends and offer to take professional photos for their LinkedIn profiles.

Creative arts

If you are the creative type, I strongly recommend Behance.net. This global online platform will allow you to create and upload your own special creative projects in several areas such as graphic design, typography, animation and motion graphics.

The site will also allow you to document which digital programs you used to create your work and to post your work up for sale.

Not only will these do-it-yourself projects help you gain experience in your field, but they will also help to enlarge your professional network and can provide a source of extra cash. So what are you waiting for?

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Grabovski, Habs tight-lipped on possible biting retribution

NHL. 'It's just a regular game' for feisty Leaf forward who caused uproar in Montreal with Feb. 9 incident

Mikhail Grabovski always manages to attract attention whenever the Toronto Maple Leafs face the Montreal Canadiens.

But the Leafs' forward isn't expecting any retaliation from the Habs on Wednesday night for his role in an alleged biting incident the last time the two rivals met.

"It's a big game for us," the Belarusian said. "Nothing special for me.

"It's just a regular game and regular points."

There wasn't anything regular about Toronto's 6-0 road win over Montreal on Feb. 9. Late in the third period, Canadiens' forward Max Pacioretty grabbed Grabovski from behind, his gloveless right hand wrapped around Grabovski's mouth and face.

Once the melee was over, Pacioretty bared his arm to the officials and accused Grabovski of biting him. Both players received 10-minute misconducts with Grabovski also landing a roughing minor.

After the contest, Pacioretty said he received a tetanus shot as a precaution. Grabovski wasn't fined or suspended due to inconclusive evidence.

Montreal (12-4-3) hasn't looked back, going 6-0-2 since. Blue-liner Josh Gorges said Tuesday that the Canadiens are more concerned about continuing their winning ways.

"We need two points," he told the Canadiens' website. "Yeah, we can look at it like we want revenge because we lost 6-0, but I think our focus has been and needs to continue to be on getting two points.

"Whatever happened yesterday or two weeks before doesn't matter. We'll approach (Wednesday's) game as if it's the most important game of the year and make sure we're ready to go out and get two points."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"I think two teams are competing for points, that's got to be the focus of our group."

Leafs coach Randy Carlyle on his outlook going into an emotionally charged rematch with Montreal

Leafs centre Mikhail Grabovski has a contentious history with his former team and the animosity only increased after he was accused of biting Canadiens forward Max Pacioretty in a scrum on Feb. 9 in Montreal. CLAUS ANDERSEN/GETTY IMAGES

Injury forces TFC's Frings into retirement

Torsten Frings announces his retirement on Tuesday at BMO Field.
CARLOS OSORIO/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Torsten Frings worked out diligently, rehabilitating his hip at home in Germany in hopes of capping his career with one final season in Toronto.

But in the end, his injury proved too much to overcome.

Toronto FC's captain announced his retirement Tuesday after 18 seasons as a pro, leaving the game with the same measure of class with which he carried himself on the field.

He stepped away, he explained, because he could no longer give his all to the team.

"I think (retirement) is the best for the club and for me. I can't help the club if I'm not 100 per cent fit, and I'm not 100 per cent fit," Frings said at a morning news conference.

"It's an emotional day for me. I'm disappointed because of my body, but I'm happy with my decision," he added. "I had a great career and it's not worth it to play with pain. It's not easy to say goodbye."

The 36-year-old former German international was coming back from hip surgery that cut short his MLS season last September. He made one preseason appearance as a substitute this month before leaving camp to attend to what TFC called a personal issue. Turns out, he was contemplating his future. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cap room to work with

At $2.43 million US, Frings was the highest-paid Toronto FC player in 2012, although as a designated player only $350,000 of that counted against the cap.

- "It's a loss and it's a gain," said TFC president Kevin Payne. "It's hard to replace a guy who's played in two World Cups, but we do have a designated player slot, international slot, and cap money available."

NBA

Pacers win testy tilt with Warriors

David West had 28 points and seven rebounds, and the Indiana Pacers overcame the ejection of Roy Hibbert following a fourth-quarter scuffle to beat the Golden State Warriors 108-97 on Tuesday night.

West also was called for a technical foul, along with the Warriors' David Lee, Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson, for the altercation that began with 6:10 remaining in the game. It began when Lee and Hibbert exchanged shoves under the basket after a missed shot. Curry tried to push Hibbert away and was shoved to the court as the fight went from the key to the baseline.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Pacers guard Lance Stephenson looks for the call from the official on Tuesday in Indianapolis.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

Ryder returns to old habitat

Michael Ryder is a Hab once again.

The Montreal Canadiens acquired Ryder and a third-round draft pick in 2013 from Dallas for Erik Cole. Ryder had a career-high 35 goals for the Stars last season. THE CANADIAN PRESS

NHL

"They're really gentlemen to do that to me this year." **Simon Gagne** who was traded back to the Philadelphia Flyers by the Los Angeles Kings on Tuesday. Gagne was thankful for the trade after the Kings decided he no longer fit in coach Darryl Sutter's system.

4 SPORTS

Romero believes his sinker is key to success

MLB. Jays starter looks to bounce back from roller-coaster 2012

Spring training is like a laboratory for pitchers, and Toronto Blue Jays left-hander Ricky Romero spent his time on the mound Tuesday testing out his sinker.

Teammate Brandon Morrow, using the Internet (brooksbaseball.net) for research, had pointed out that Romero had strayed from his sinker last year — he had thrown it just eight per cent of the time in 2012 against left-handers and 13 per cent against righties, compared to 26 and 21 per cent in 2011.

In all, he used the sinker 11 per cent compared to 22 per cent the previous year.

"Looking at those numbers, they're pretty crazy," said Romero, who has the printout in his locker to prove it.

Toronto Blue Jays starting pitcher Ricky Romero throws a warmup pitch on Tuesday in Dunedin, Fla. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

He's not sure what happened, other than he stopped trusting the two-seamer pitch in what turned out to be a roller-coaster year.

On Tuesday, Romero estimated he threw the sinker 90 to 95 per cent of the time in his first outing of the spring — a 8-4 loss to the Minnesota Twins that dropped Toronto's Grapefruit League record to 2-3.

"(I'm) just trying to get that pitch back and get it under control," said Romero. "But it definitely felt good to be back out there."

Get the sinker back and Romero believes he will "get back to the guy that I was."

"Getting ground balls out and quick outs. It all came off that sinker.... I know if it's down, it's going to be a ground ball more often than not," he added.

Romero had off-season elbow surgery and injections to his knees after a 2012 campaign that saw him suffer a franchise-record 13 consecutive losses after starting the season 8-1.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Who will catch Dickey?

The Toronto Blue Jays will decide who catches knuckleballer R.A. Dickey after the World Baseball Classic, says manager John Gibbons.

- Incumbent J.P. Arencibia has insisted he wants to handle Dickey this season, although the Jays have three catchers in camp — Henry Blanco, Josh Thole and Mike Nickeas — who have experience working with Dickey.

Spanish soccer

Ronaldo and Madrid dominate Barcelona

Cristiano Ronaldo got the better of Lionel Messi on Tuesday, scoring twice to lead Real Madrid to a 3-1 win at Barcelona and a spot in the Copa del Rey final.

After the first leg of their semifinal ended 1-1, Madrid neutralized Barcelona's passing game and counterattacked to perfection at the Camp Nou to hand its archrival its first home loss in any competition since last April.

It was also a second straight cup setback for the Catalan club, which is running away with the Spanish league but lost 2-0 at AC Milan in the first leg of its Champions League last-16 matchup.

While Messi had a quiet night, Ronaldo scored for a sixth straight visit to Camp Nou when he earned and converted a penalty in the 13th minute. Ronaldo hit again on the break in the 57th before Raphael Varane got his second goal of the series in the 68th.

Jordi Alba pulled a late goal back for defending champion Barcelona, but it was much too late to prevent Madrid from going through 4-2 on aggregate.

Madrid will play either Atletico Madrid or Sevilla in the cup final on May 18.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after scoring against FC Barcelona during a Copa del Rey soccer match in Barcelona on Tuesday. MANU FERNANDEZ/THE ASSOCAITED PRESS

LEAFS' PROSPECT POOL GETTING DEEPER

THE HOCKEY NEWS
Adam Proteau
toronto@metronews.ca

Morgan Rielly, right, pictured last June 22 at the 2012 NHL Entry Draft, is the only Leafs-controlled player on The Hockey News's Future Watch list of top 50 NHL prospects in 2013. BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES FILE

While the Maple Leafs are currently enjoying a good degree of success this season, it's important to remember that all NHL GMs, including Toronto's Dave Nonis, have to keep their eye on the future of the team as well as its present-day state. And although the Buds have made progress when it comes to their prospect stockpile, it's clear they still have a ways to go.

Indeed, in The Hockey News's Future Watch ranking of the 30 prospect pools, the Leafs ranked an unimpressive 25th overall. It's even more dubious when you consider that Toronto was ranked 20th in the 2012 edition of Future Watch and third from last in 2011's.

There's no doubt that the rankings, which are prepared in consultation with scouts and front-office personnel from around the league, are debatable. But there's also no doubt the Leafs are not the expert identifiers and developers of young talent that, say, the New Jersey Devils have been for the better part of the past three decades.

So you have to give full marks to former GM Brian Burke for making a conscious effort to bulk up Toronto's scouting and development team. And it's also important to recognize the fruits of that important initiative won't be visible to the naked eye of the average Leafs fan for a while yet. That's why Toronto has just one elite player — 2012 first-round draft pick Morgan Rielly — in Future Watch's list of the top 50 NHL prospects in 2013.

That said, it's not as though the organization is completely bereft of potential after that. Prospects such as defencemen Matt Finn and Stuart Percy and forwards Tyler Biggs and Joe Colborne are working at their craft in the minors or junior and could become key pieces for the NHL team at some point.

The point is, as we're seeing with Nazem Kadri and Matt Frattin when they're in the Leafs lineup, it takes patience to see real change.

So don't jump all over Toronto for not having the cream of the prospect crop. They're better than they've been in some time — and the days of quick-fixes with veteran NHLers past their primes are long gone.

That's progress enough.

Rodman worms his way into North Korea as hoops diplomat

Basketball abroad.
Flamboyant former NBA star insists his intent is to teach the game, not stir up trouble

North Koreans play basketball at a public court in Pyongyang, North Korea. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

TV crews surround Dennis Rodman at Beijing Capital International Airport on Tuesday en route to North Korea. ANDY WONG/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former NBA star Dennis Rodman brought his basketball skills Tuesday and flamboyant style — tattoos, nose studs and all — to a country with possibly the world's strictest dress code: North Korea.

Landing in Pyongyang with VICE television, the American athlete and showman known as "The Worm" became an unlikely ambassador for sports diplomacy at a time of heightened tensions between the U.S. and North Korea.

Rodman is joining three members of the Harlem Globetrotters basketball team and a VICE correspondent for a news show on North Korea that will air on HBO later this year, VICE told The Associated Press in an exclusive interview Tuesday before they landed.

Rodman and VICE said the Americans hope to engage in a little "basketball diplomacy" by running a basketball camp for children and playing with North Korea's top basketball stars — and, they hope, drawing leader Kim Jong Un to a game.

"Is sending the Harlem Globetrotters and Dennis Rodman to the DPRK strange? In a word, yes," said VICE founder Shane Smith, referring to North Korea by the initials of its formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "But finding common ground on the basketball court is a beautiful thing."

Rodman might seem an odd fit for North Korea, where men's fashion rarely ventures beyond military khaki and where growing facial hair is forbidden. Though there's a burgeoning fashion sense among the women of Pyongyang, the men in this conservative society still tend to dress austerely: khaki work suits, military uniforms, dark blue Mao-style suits or Western-style suit jackets.

In contrast, Rodman was a poster boy for flashy excess during his heyday in the 1990s. Shown a photo of a snarling Rodman, piercings dangling from his lower lip and two massive tattoos emblazoned on his chest, one North Korean in Pyongyang recoiled and said: "He looks like a monster!"

But Rodman is also a Hall of Fame basketball player and one of the best defenders and rebounders to ever play the game. During his storied career he won five NBA championships. On Tuesday, Rodman, now 51, was low-key and soft-spoken in cobalt blue sweatpants and a Polo Ralph Lauren cap. There was a bit of flash: white-rimmed sunglasses and studs in his nose and lower lip. But he told The Associated Press he was there to teach basketball and talk to people, not to stir up trouble.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

American influence

The U.S. remains Enemy No. 1 in North Korea, and North Koreans have limited exposure to American pop culture. But they know Michael Jordan, a former teammate of Dennis Rodman's when they both played for the Chicago Bulls in the 1990s.

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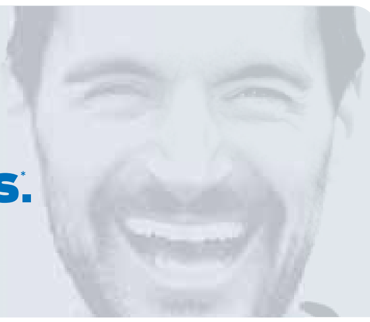

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In most cases, the customer will be responsible for making all scheduled payments in accordance with his or her purchase or lease agreement but will receive a cheque from the dealer for an amount equivalent to the first three bi-weekly payments, including tax, up to the Maximum Amount. The means by which the Offer will be executed by dealers to customers will vary based on the type of purchase or lease agreement - see dealer for full details. Offer not available to cash purchase customers. This offer can be used in conjunction with most retail consumer offers made available by Ford at either the time of factory order or delivery, but not both. 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Class is Full-Size Pickups under 8,500 lb GVWR vs. 2012/2013 competitors. ©2013 Sirius Canada Inc. "SIRIUS", the SIRIUS dog logo, channel names and logos are trademarks of SIRIUS XM Radio Inc. and are used under license. ©2013 Ford Motor Company of Canada, Limited. All rights reserved.

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Get your kicks in the new Mazda6

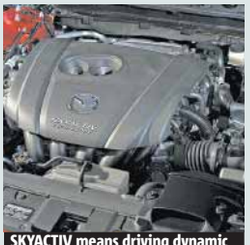
ALL PHOTOS WHEELBASE

Review. The more established members of the mid-size sedan class are in for a shock once they spy this car

MALCOLM GUNN
wheelbasemedia.com

2014 Mazda6

- **Type.** Four-door, front-wheel-drive mid-size sedan
- **Engine (hp).** 2.5-litre DOHC I4 (184)
- **Transmissions.** Six-speed manual; six-speed automatic
- **Base price (incl. destination).** $26,200



SKYACTIV means driving dynamic that's supposed to be closer to what you get in a sports car.

For Mazda, shaking up the automotive establishment is all in a day's work.

Always the rebel, Mazda has a reputation for going against the grain in product development. The automaker refuses to offer a hybrid powertrain option, which is tantamount to sacrilege. Instead, it pursues internal-combustion-engine refinement under the SKYACTIV label. The 2013 CX-5 wagon was the first all-new Mazda fitted with this technology (direct fuel injection, etc.) and the recently launched third-edition Mazda6 is following suit.

From most angles the Mazda6 is more expressive than the previous version and closely resembles Mazda's Shinari and Takeri concept cars that revealed a new styling direction. The front-end treatment is arguably the best looking in this class, while the rest of the car doesn't stray too far from the past and retains the familiar sweep of the roofline and truncated rear.

The new-design Mazda6 sheet metal is the gift-wrapping that hides considerable technological advancements beneath the skin.

Following its initial launch, Mazda will offer a Volkswagen-challenging 2.2-litre four-cylinder turbo-diesel option that also receives the SKYACTIV appellation. It features lowered engine compression that Mazda says makes it clean burning without any nasty particulates exiting the exhaust.

A recent drive in one of Mazda's test mules confirms that the diesel 2.2 generates plenty of torque, but that it also drives just like a gasoline engine without the usual tell-tale clatter normally associated with diesels. Exact power and torque specs will be released closer to launch.

The base GX model that lists for $26,200, including destination charges, comes with the usual power and comfort ingredients and push-button start. It also comes with a touch-screen display with Bluetooth networking and a rear-view camera.

With its dedicated approach to improving power, reducing overall energy consumption and creating a heartbeat-skipping shell, the Mazda6 will generate plenty of look-sees, or at least make buyers seriously ponder this nifty, thrifty sedan.

Engine

The base engine — in fact the only available powerplant at this point since the V6 is toast — is a 2.5-litre four-cylinder that makes 184 horsepower and 185 pound-feet of torque. The uniqueness of the new four-cylinder is its higher-than-usual 13:1 compression ratio that gives the engine

Design

From most angles the Mazda6 is more expressive than the previous version and closely resembles Mazda's Shinari and Takeri concept cars that revealed a new styling direction. The front-end treatment is arguably the best looking in this class, while the rest retains the familiar sweep of the

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The Ford 1965 Mustang, equipped with a 5.0 Cammer engine. FORD ARCHIVES

Revving the five point ... oh!

Autoknow. 420 hp is a great number, but it took a group of Mustang enthusiasts to find it in the 5.0-litre engine

JEFF MELNYCHUK
wheelbasemedia.com

As the fender badging points out, Ford began seriously marketing the 302 V8 as litres, but 5.0 is nice, round number. Also round (or flat, perhaps) was its paltry 140 horsepower rating. FORD ARCHIVES

Michael Delproposto owns a 1967 Ford Mustang coupe. Brian Armstrong suns himself at high speed in a red 2007 Shelby GT500 convertible. Adam Christian's 1966 Mustang is part way through its resurrection as a fully modernized classic, while Chris Tucker's weapon of choice is a 1983 Mercury Capri, the twin to the Mustang.

These four, and 14 other Mustang owners, form a special club. They're the men and women responsible for Ford's 5.0-litre V8 found in the current Mustang GT.

Who better to put on the project than people who would fabricate the exhaust manifolds at home in the garage? Yes, engineering savvy from rabid Mustang enthusiasts is what's under the hood of your 420-horsepower 2013 Mustang GT, even if the 5.0 is not technically "back" as Ford has been touting since 2010.

As with the Hemi, the only part of the 5.0 that's truly "back" (and from a rather inglorious past, at that) is the name. Even the displacement is different than the previous 5.0-litre engine — which dates back to the late 1960s as the 302 was actually 4.9 litres.

Forty-year-old technology? Back? We certainly hope not. You could take a lot of shots at the 5.0 over the years for its actual lack of performance under the hood of a stock Mustang and even bigger shots at its 4.6-litre successor that always seemed to be a step or two behind Chevrolet and Chrysler.

While the 4.6 proliferated in the late 1990s, a groundswell of affection for 5.0 kept the old cam-in-block design alive and well and winning all sorts of racing events. In the hands of privateers, the 5.0 actually had something Ford never seemed to give it: power, and lots of it. Fitted with aluminum heads, the 5.0 became a lightweight and potent performer that reached legendary and perhaps even heroic status. The crew here at Wheelbase Media tested a variant of the 5.0 at 482 horsepower and 440 pound-feet of torque (vimeo.com/wheelbase).

Meanwhile, by Ford's own admission, the Mustang's 4.6-litre V8, at 315 horsepower, was outmatched ("By 2007, the Mustang competitive landscape was beginning to change . . .") at least on paper, and in need of a serious upgrade.

Capitalizing on the original 5.0's post-Ford success and popularity was likely a smart move in launching the new 5.0, especially considering the grand plan.

Enter the 18 members of Ford's 5.0-litre team with a goal of creating more than 400 horsepower. This might seem like a lofty goal considering the 4.6 was 85 horsepower shy of 400 and that the bigger 5.7-litre Chrysler Hemi V8 was in the 370 range and the bigger-still 6.2-litre Camaro V8 was at 426 horsepower. But, what most people didn't know was that Ford had been offering a 420-horsepower 5.0-litre double-overhead Cammer engine through its parts department since 2003.

Listing for about $15,000 US, the Cammer was ready-made proof the power could be made with 5.0 litres of displacement — in this case, a 4.6-litre engine block with a larger bore — but push the clock ahead seven years and fuel economy and durability were major considerations, especially for a high-volume car such as the Mustang.

Team member Todd Brewer, who owns a 1987 5.0-litre Mustang GT, was in charge of double-overhead-cam cylinder-head development of the new 5.0.

"Striking the optimal balance between all of these attributes required us to do all the things we know how to do, only better," he said.

Variable cam timing makes the engine more docile and thrifty when your foot isn't jammed to the floorboard, such as when cruising the freeway or idling at a red light.

Fuel economy, despite the hefty power and torque increase, is at least as good as the previous 4.6. Engine efficiency is one chapter of that story. The Mustang GT with the new 5.0 for 2011 (rated at 412 horsepower for the inaugural year) was claimed to pull down 25 m.p.g. on the highway.

The 5.0 is all aluminum, too, which means it's just 430 pounds, which is 20 per cent lighter than the physically much smaller all-iron 5.0 of old, according to Ford.

How important is diet? Carroll Shelby said at the time, "It might not be as sexy as adding more horsepower or bigger brakes, but shaving pounds off a car is the single smartest move you can make."

Smart? It's enough to make you wonder if the 18 members of the 5.0 team weren't designing the new engine to power their own cars. Then again, maybe they were.

Engine evolution

1 The Cammer

The idea of a 5.0-litre engine with dual overhead camshafts is hardly foreign to Ford since it offered this 420-horsepower 5.0 Cammer in its parts catalogue and showed it between the fenders of a 1965 Mustang back in 2003. The current 5.0 shares little with this engine, however. PHOTO CREDIT: FORD ARCHIVES

2 From the 289

The original 5.0-litre engine was a descendent of the 302-cubic-inch engine from the 1960s. The 302 evolved from the 289 (4.7-litre) engine, pictured here.

PHOTO CREDIT: WHEELBASEMEDIA.COM

3 '80s and '90s

The 5.0-litre engine of the 1980s and '90s wasn't exactly a heavy hitter, but it gained fame in the hands of privateers who successfully raced with it. Here, this 331-cubic-inch engine is derived from a 1994 5.0 and produces 482 horsepower and 440 pound-feet of torque. This is actually a street engine, not a race engine. PHOTO CREDIT: WHEELBASEMEDIA.COM

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All GM vehicles are getting Internet, now where do we go to the bathroom?

Auto Pilot. A future where all cars are connected sounds great, but will we ever leave our vehicles?

AUTO PILOT
Mike Goetz
drive@metronews.ca

Get ready for a future where virtually all vehicles are Internet hot spots.

At a mobility conference in Spain this week, GM announced it will equip virtually all its 2015 models in the United States and Canada with 4G LTE high-speed broadband. Some of those 2015 models should be on sale by mid 2014.

There is a sprinkling of models from other manufacturers, like Mercedes-Benz, and Chrysler, that have 3G-based hot spots. BMW introduced 4G LTE wi-fi to its 7 Series this past year. And of course you can get onto the Internet on many vehicles by syncing your smartphone into their infotainment systems.

GM
Built-In Wi-Fi Hot Spot Coming in 2014
Faster Mobile Data Speeds
4G LTE
Streaming Video in the Back Seat
Enhanced Safety and Telematics Features
Added Real-Time Services

GM has announced it will be "embedding" all of its 2015 models with 4G LTE high-speed broadband. HANDOUT

But while we have been definitely moving toward this wi-fi future, the GM announcement is a declaration of sorts that Internet hot spots in the majority of vehicles is a fait accompli.

GM said "embedding" or "hard wiring" vehicles with LTE high-speed broadband is a faster and more reliable connection for infotainment offerings.

Otherwise, GM has to rely on whatever good or wonky smartphone technology and coverage that is in the hands of its customers.

Also, with this system, customers don't have to have a smartphone to use the vehicle's connected services, because, well, their vehicle is a smartphone.

And finally, having a vehicle with the capacity to be connected to the World Wide Web in such a profound way sets up all sorts of fantastic connected scenarios.

GM could update a lot of software wirelessly, and keep their vehicles up-to-date on a whole bunch of parameters, not just infotainment ones.

So yeah, all great. Video streaming movies. People on Facebook or Skype with their i-Pads. Real time traffic updates.

Pulling information from the cloud.

Yada Yada Yada.

Extra charges?

The downside

Well, the general nature of face-to-face human contact, nurtured and evolved through millennia, now reversing and degrading to a world where humans only feel comfortable looking at a screen of some sort, might be one.

But say we don't worry about that one, what about your monthly car payments? I'm guessing there will be an extra charge for data services. Not sure, but my current Internet and cellphone provider seems to operate on such a revenue model.

Another thing: my car already has a better sound system than any in our house. In the future it might also have the best wi-fi.

You can already feed yourself via the drive-thrus. You'll never wanna get out of the car. The need for washroom facilities is still there, but maybe they're working on that too.

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Opening the liftgate: just kick it

Kickin' it: Ford's new Escape and C-Max Hybrid models are equipped with hands-free liftgate technology. HANDOUT

Driving Force. Ford finds solution to a common errand running problem

JIL MCINTOSH
drive@metronews.ca

If you've ever had to put down an armload of groceries so you could open your vehicle's liftgate, you probably think there must be a better way.

Ford agreed, and its new Escape and C-Max Hybrid models can be equipped with a hands-free electric liftgate that opens when you have the key fob in your pocket, and you kick your foot under the rear bumper.

"There are two sensors, one underneath where the fascia wraps around, and one at the rear," says Kaci Hrynewich, program management at Ford Motor Company.

"These create a field that is disturbed when a foot (is placed) in it, and both of those sensors have to have that detection in order for them to 'talk' to the module to open the liftgate."

The theory behind the liftgate is relatively simple — it uses motion technology similar to that in some video games — but actually putting it into a production model was more of a challenge.

"We have multiple components all coming together, so we had to figure out how far away you have to be," Hrynewich says. "We had to try it with the metallic paint on our colour palette to make sure the sensor field wouldn't be affected by it.

"We also had a tight packaging space, which was a concern because we couldn't put (the module) too close to a bumper beam, because it's conductive and it wouldn't work. It's easy to look at the guidelines for the system, but then you have to put them into the vehicle you're trying to engineer, and we had to package that and make sure it still functioned properly."

Each of the two sensors has a specific function. One senses that your leg is there, while the other detects the motion, and both have to be triggered by the kicking motion in order for the liftgate to open or close.

Otherwise, someone walking by could potentially trigger the leg sensor, while an animal walking under the bumper could set off the second detector. The vehicle must also detect the electronic key fob before any motion starts the liftgate action.

Liftgate facts

- The earliest power "liftgates" were on station wagons. In 1971, full-size GM wagons had two-piece power tailgates, where the window slid up into the roof, and the bottom gate slipped down under the floor.
- Ford's hands-free liftgate underwent hundreds of tests, including extreme heat and cold, snow and rain, and being hit with shopping carts and toys to ensure it would only open under the right conditions.

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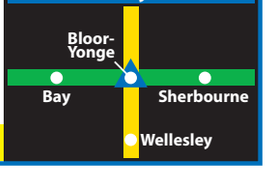

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Detective Epicene's Clue-of-the-Day: "When Kenk, the world's biggest bike thief, was arrested, his partner was performing a fugue by Barber in Banff."

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
This would be a good day to clarify your ambitions and to let those in positions of power and authority know that unless they offer you something better you will be looking elsewhere. Say it and mean it.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
It's time to get tough with someone who has been taking liberties. Yes, of course, you could blame yourself for allowing the situation to drag on so long but ultimately it's their fault, not yours, so speak up.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You may need to backtrack a little today if you don't want to fall out with a friend or work colleague. OK, so you believe that what you said was true but did you have to be so sarcastic about it?

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Be honest with loved ones today, even if what you have to tell them is not what they want to hear. If they mean something to you then you must make sure they see the light — for their own good.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
A new health or fitness program could be just what you need to get yourself moving again, physically and mentally. And stick with it this time. It won't be long before you see some seriously encouraging results.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You may be surprised by what happens today but don't just stand there or you could miss out on an opportunity to benefit from unexpected changes. And don't feel guilty if you gain from someone else's misfortune.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
You may find it hard to turn down a call for assistance but it's necessary. If you don't, you will find yourself doing things for others that they really should be doing for themselves. Don't let them take advantage.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
The planets will give you the courage you require to start something you have been yearning to do for ages. Great changes are taking place all around you but don't be afraid: They are the kind of changes you need.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Don't stop thinking and don't stop looking for ways to improve your position in life. Over the next few days there will be more than one opportunity to make money from sudden events. If you don't then someone else will.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
An idea that pops into your head out of nowhere may be outrageous, but the more you allow yourself to think about it the more you will like it. Some say you are too cautious to take risks. Prove them wrong.

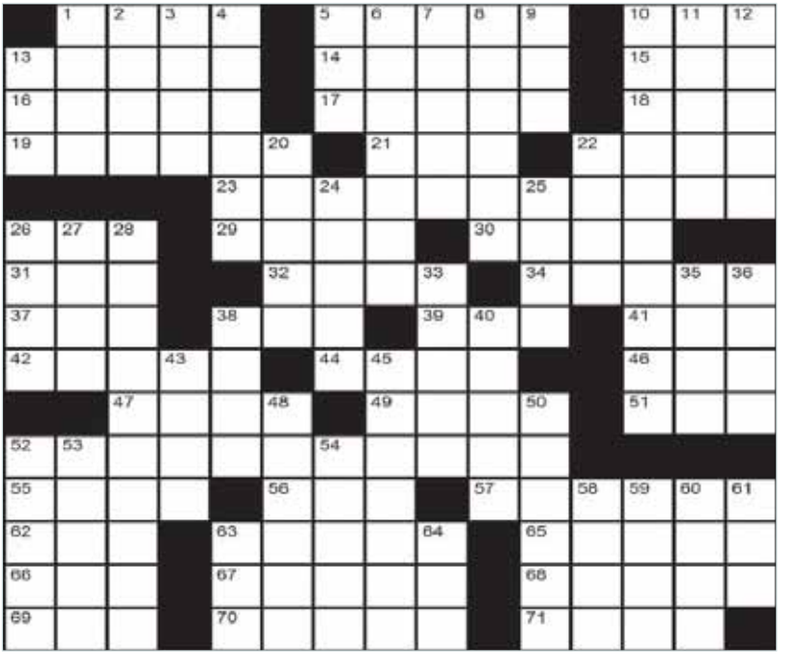
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
There are so many changes going on that even the most adventurous of Aquarians may be wondering where it is all going to end. But change never ends — you know that. Make change your friend.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
If you approach a difficult problem from an unusual angle today you may be surprised how simple the answer is. If you are still stuck though you should ask someone you trust.

SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

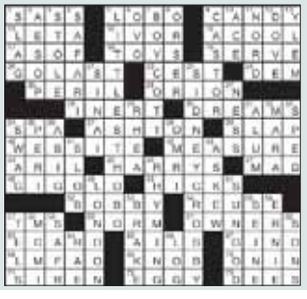
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Bell's loud ring
5. Fab Four's famous Road
10. Roll of grass
13. Ancient Greek colony
14. Irish writer, James __
15. 'Fort' finisher (Luck)
16. Montreal's __ Royal
17. Illegally sell tickets
18. Point
19. Gauge
21. Bambi's aunt
22. Train sound, when repeated
23. "Try Honesty" band: 2 wds.
26. Ms. Simpson, for short
29. Holler!
30. Curved music symbol
31. Aunt's li'l husband
32. Horse's pace
34. Recounts
37. Ski-__
38. Jewel
39. Filmmaker, John __
41. Archery skill
42. Computer chip company
44. Aid and __
46. Modern
47. Really mad
49. Pro __ (In proportion)
51. Made a hole in the ground
52. Canadian fashion journalist born in Toronto: 2 wds.
55. City, in Latin
56. 'M' of PM, for short
57. The __ Family (Celtic music group)
62. Writer Mr. Levin
63. Blue Rodeo singer Jim
65. Dutch cheese
66. Defraud
67. Nymph of Greek mythology
68. Ms. Winfrey
69. Antlered animal
70. Actor Sean's surnamesakes
71. Profits

Down
1. Jeers
2. Burden
3. Kate Hudson movie musical
4. F. Scott Fitzgerald novel, The Great __
5. Mr. McLean's of the Backstreet Boys
6. "The Prayer" duo: Celine Dion & Andrea __
7. "Not __ __ stretch of the imagination."
8. Acclamations
9. "Uh-huh."
10. Donald or Kiefer
11. Tears-inducer
12. The Home __
13. The Monkees hit: "__ _ Believer"
20. Warfare attack
22. Hint
24. Animal of The Andes
25. __ sax
26. Dame __ Dench
27. 'Phenom' ending
28. Financial institution founded in Halifax in 1832
33. Fine-tune
35. Stead
36. City haze
38. Type of valley
40. Sea __ (Cute mammal)
43. Sea eagles [var. sp.]
45. Actor Mr. Fraser
48. Bashful
50. Catherine of __ (King Henry VIII's first wife)
52. Orange __
53. Film legend Mr. Flynn
54. Vice President Joe __
58. Negative reply
59. Mr. Russell
60. Filmmaker Ms. Lupino, and others
61. "Uh-uh."
63. Crime fighter
64. Li'l length units

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

4	7						5	1
		2	3			6		
1			5		6			
9				3		2	6	
				2				
	1	3		8				9
			2		9			7
		4			8	5		
7	5						2	8

Yesterday's Sudoku

2	5	4	8	7	1	6	3	9
6	8	1	3	9	5	4	2	7
3	9	7	4	6	2	8	1	5
5	2	6	9	1	7	3	8	4
8	1	3	5	4	6	7	9	2
7	4	9	2	3	8	5	6	1
4	6	8	1	5	9	2	7	3
9	3	2	7	8	4	1	5	6
1	7	5	6	2	3	9	4	8

Today
1°/-1°
1-3cm of snow
90%

Thursday
1°/-4°
Flurries
60%

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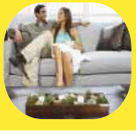

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Optima SX Turbo shown△

Soul 4u Luxury shown△

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CITY (A/T): 8.0L/100KM

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WITH **$0** DOWN

AT **0.9%** APR

FOR UP TO **60** MONTHS

AUTO, AIR & KEYLESS ENTRY

bi-weekly for 60 months, amortized over 84 months with **$0 DOWN PAYMENT.** $5,605 remaining balance. Offer includes delivery, destination and fees of $1,988 and **$1,500 LOAN SAVINGS§. BASED ON A PURCHASE PRICE OF $20,683.** Offer based on 2013 Forte Sedan LX + AT.

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CITY (A/T): 8.6L/100KM

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HWY (M/T): 6.7L/100KM
CITY (M/T): 8.5L/100KM

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WITH **$0** DOWN

AT **2.49%** APR

FOR UP TO **60** MONTHS

AUTO & KEYLESS ENTRY

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